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Scripting the Persians:

Herodotus' Use of the Persian 'Trivium'

(Truth Telling, Archery, and Horsemanship) in the *Histories*

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by

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This paper examines the relationship between Herodotus' ethnographic account of the Persians and his narrative of their actions in the *Histories*. The first chapter analyzes the placement of this ethnography within the historian's description of the fall of Croesus and the rise of Cyrus and then examines the language that Herodotus uses to describe the Persian customs. The second chapter focuses more narrowly on the elements of the Persian trivium (truth telling, archery, and horsemanship) and analyzes the way in which the historian incorporates these themes into his narrative. Finally, the third chapter of the report examines how Herodotus integrates all three elements of the trivium into an extended *logos*, that of the revolt of the Persian nobles against the usurper Magi and the subsequent ascension of Darius. This analysis thereby demonstrates that the multifaceted relationship between the historian's Persian ethnography and his narrative connects the Persians' successes with their adherence to their customs.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Herodotus weaves into the *Histories* a vast amount of ethnographic material, in addition to the many other *Exkurse* that he incorporates into his account. This report examines the connection between his larger narrative and one of these ethnographies, that of the Persians, found in the first book of the *Histories*. This analysis establishes a relationship between the Persians' adherence to or departure from their customs and their successes and failures in Herodotus' narrative. Part of the aim of the historian's work is to demonstrate the causes of the vicissitudes of human fortune. In Herodotus' estimation, no single explanation reveals all of the reasons for the volatility of human fate as evident in the *Histories*. In an effort to analyze one cause of individuals' and states' successes and failures, this report examines how Herodotus uses specific elements of the Persian ethnography to explicate the relationship between custom, action, and outcome in his narrative.

At the outset of his inquiry, Herodotus claims to have cast a wide net in his search for suitable topics of discussion in the *Histories*. In the proem to his work, he maintains that he will set out the many exploits of men, leaving no avenue of investigation unexplored:

> Ἡροδότου Ἁλικαρνησσέος ἱστορίης ἀπόδεξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ἐξ ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε καὶ θωμαστά, τὰ μὲν ῞Ελλησι, τὰ δὲ βαρβάροισι ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλέα γένηται, τά τε ἄλλα καὶ δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι.[1] (Proem)
>
> This is the publication of the inquiry (*historia*) of Herodotus of Halicarnassus so that the deeds done by men would not become forgotten

[1] The Greek text of Herodotus given throughout this paper follows that of Hude's (1960) edition of the *OCT*.

> in time, and so that the great and marvelous deeds, performed by both Greeks and barbarians, would not be without fame, both other things and, in particular, the cause for which they went to war with one another.[2]

Herodotus' *apodexis* is vague but thereby effectively marks out the all-encompassing nature of his work.[3] Jacoby uses the vagueness of the proem as part of his larger argument that the historian's seemingly unfocused narrative reflects a multi-stage method of composition or even that the author reflects such disparate concerns in the various segments of the text that the *Histories* cannot be analyzed as a coherent unit.[4] Conversely, Erbse argues that any attempt to use the proem to predict the content of the *Histories* will result in confusion and misdirection.[5] Bakker argues that the historian displays this ambiguity in his proem to allow his audience to judge on their own the events laid out in the *Histories*.[6] In the process of delving into Herodotus' work, therefore, his readers can each draw their own conclusions as to the causes and significance of certain events. Bakker argues that Herodotus intends to allow his audience to be placed in the position of an historian analyzing and evaluating the relationships between the various people, states, and conflicts that Herodotus discusses in his work. Herodotus' explicit purpose in undertaking this monumental effort reveals his intention of expressing the causes of individuals' and states' successes and failures.

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[2] All translations given throughout this paper are those of the author.
[3] Scholars argue that the term *apodexis* also demonstrates Herodotus' method of publication or dissemination of the *Histories*. v., e.g., Evans (1991), pp. 90-100, and Thomas (2000), pp. 257-60 for the argument that this term reflects that the *Histories* were first set out as a work in progress, rather than a completed text. Nagy (1987), pp. 175-84, argues that the patterns of orality evident in the *Histories* reflect the performative nature of the work.
[4] Jacoby (1913), pp. 275-80.
[5] Erbse (1992), pp. 123-25. Erbse also reviews the scholarship on the proem and provides a good introduction to the various themes that scholars discover in Herodotus' *apodexis*.
[6] Bakker et al., (2002), pp. 3-32.

The historian claims that he records the events of the past to ensure that the deeds of men become neither forgotten (ἐξίτηλα) nor without fame (ἀκλέα), a desire that compels Herodotus to leave no line of inquiry unexamined. He reveals the broad sweeping scope of his *Histories* by claiming that he will: ὁμοίως μικρὰ καὶ μεγάλα ἄστεα ἀνθρώπων ἐπεξιών, "go through in detail both the small and large cities of men alike" (1.4.3). As if to demonstrate how famous events and notable figures can fall into the state of obscurity that he so fears, the historian follows this statement with a description of the effects of the vicissitude of human fortune:

> Τὰ [ἄστεα] γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν σμικρὰ γέγονε· τὰ δὲ ἐπ' ἐμέο ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν σμικρά. Τὴν ἀνθρωπηίην ὦν ἐπιστάμενος εὐδαιμονίην οὐδαμὰ ἐν τὠυτῷ μένουσαν, ἐπιμνήσομαι ἀμφοτέρων ὁμοίως. (1.5.4)
>
> For those [cities] which were great in former times, many of them have become small, and those which were great in my time, were at an earlier date small. Thus, understanding that human fortune does not remain in the same state, I will make mention of both alike.

The contrasting adjectives μέγας and σμικρός carry the connotations of both size and quality or importance. Thus, Herodotus has in mind that these cities vary not only in magnitude, but also alternatively between being "of great importance" and "of lesser importance."[7] This report traces the rise and fall of various Persians throughout the *Histories* and analyzes the role that their customs play in their successes and failures. Herodotus uses the information that he presents in his ethnography of the Persians to connect their adherence to their *nomoi* with their victories and their departures from these customs with their demise.

[7] v. LSJ, p. 1088, meaning II.1, and p. 1133, meaning I.2, respectively, for the connotations of significance.

A brief summary of a few of the more significant works of scholarship that examine Herodotus' use of the ethnographies reveals a variety of related explanations, ranging from internal historiographic concerns to external didacticism. Hartog, in his groundbreaking work on the *Histories*, argues that Herodotus uses the Scythian ethnography as a means for the Greeks to define themselves through the explication of a set of customs inversely related to their own.[8] That is, that in looking through the "mirror" of the Scythians' customs, this historian's audience learns what it means to be "Greek." Hartog makes the important observation that the structure of the historian's presentation of Scythian *nomoi* parallels his later narrative of the Persian invasion of Hellas.[9] West follows Hartog's views about the relationship between the Scythian ethnography and the overarching structure of the *Histories*.[10] She differs from Hartog, who asserts that Herodotus is purposefully mendacious in his presentation of the Scythian customs, in arguing that that Herodotus adjusts his presentation of the customs to suit his purpose in distinguishing between Greek and Scythian customs, but that he otherwise presents traditions that he has uncovered during his research into foreign cultures.[11] Thomas extends her own analysis beyond the Scythian *nomoi*, suggesting that Herodotus develops the themes of his ethnographies in a manner that conforms to the larger Greek tradition of recounting foreign customs within the medico-scientific authors of the early fifth century BCE.[12] Munson examines Herodotus' ethnographic accounts and concludes that, at least in part, the historian develops an evaluation of the attitudes of both Greeks

[8] Hartog (1988), v. esp. pp. 35-60 and 360-77.
[9] Hartog (1988), v. pp. 34-56, esp. 44-9.
[10] West in Bakker et al (2002), pp. 437-56.
[11] Hartog (1988), pp. 371-82; West in Bakker et al (2002), pp. 446-56.
[12] Thomas (2000), pp. 75-134.

and foreigners in order to stress the disparities between the internal ethnic definitions evident within the larger Hellenic world.[13]

Common to much of the scholarship analyzing the historian's use of his ethnographic accounts is the concept of self-definition among the Greeks. As noted above, the model of Hellenic self-definition through comparison with the "other" began with Hartog's work, but has since led scholars of other genres of classical literature to follow suit.[14] Georges notes that in examining the Greek practice of self-definition through a comparison of their own *nomoi* with foreign customs, we come to understand the style of the Greeks' presentation of others' customs more than the foreign cultures themselves.[15] Mitchell, in her recent work tracing the development of the concept of Pan-Hellenism among the Greeks, argues that neither Herodotus' account of the Greco-Persian Wars nor the conflicts themselves prove to be the crucial event in the development of the idea of the all-encompassing, universally "Greek" culture, but instead maintains that this concept develops over a long period of time, beginning in the archaic period and continuing throughout the fifth century BCE.[16] J. Hall likewise discusses the conceptualization of a universal "Hellenicity," arguing that Greek self-definition and the Hellenes' consciousness of the "other" develop simultaneously.[17] Herodotus incorporates into his account of Persian customs patterns of "otherness" and self-definition similar to those evident in his other ethnographies, but he refines and narrows this technique of

[13] Munson (2001), pp. 134-232.
[14] Notably among them is E. Hall (1989), who argues for a similar phenomenon in Greek tragedy. She relies heavily upon Hartog's analysis of Herodotus' text to show the "rhetoric of otherness" evident in the tragic plays.
[15] Georges (1994), pp. 47-75.
[16] Mitchell (2007), v. esp. pp. 77-168.
[17] J. Hall (2002), v. esp. pp. 172-220.

explicating divergence by specifically highlighting the omissions evident in the Persians' *nomoi*.

This report focuses on Herodotus' presentation of the Persian customs and the relationship between these *nomoi* and the Persians' actions in the *Histories*. Though this analysis will not deal directly with the question of Herodotus' sources, it is worth note that scholars have long examined the basis of Herodotus' information regarding foreign customs and events. Most notably, Fehling, in his hypercritical attack against the historian's method of source citation, claims that any section in which Herodotus names his source, regardless of the form of that citation, contains demonstrably false information.[18] Fehling's work has given rise to a large group of scholars who all operated under the assumption that the historian's source citations cast doubt onto his account.[19] Pritchett reversed this trend in his straightforward attack on Fehling, West, and the others who adopted this view.[20] Likewise, Murray's work on the oral sources available to Herodotus in Asia Minor has since reinvigorated the thought that Herodotus may well reflect local, Asian traditions in circulation during the fifth century BCE, while still developing his narrative to suit his own historiographic purposes.[21] Scholars of history must reconcile the discrepancies evident between Herodotus' presentation of the history

[18] Fehling (1971).
[19] v., e.g., Hegyi (1973), pp. 73-87; Waters (1985); West (1985), pp. 278-305; Gould (1989), esp. ch. 2; Lateiner (1989), pp. 91-103; and Mandell (1990), pp. 103-8.
[20] Pritchett (1993).
[21] Murray (1987), pp. 93-115, v. esp. p. 110. Murray stresses the dual nature of Herodotus' oral sources, that is, that the historian had access only to the Greeks working within the Persian court in Asia Minor but direct access to aristocratic families in Hellas. Murray, perhaps, draws too narrow a conclusion in asserting that Herodotus had no access to aristocratic Persian sources. The historian quite likely gathered oral testimonies from multiple strata of Persian society, both directly and indirectly.

of the Persian Empire with the often contradictory, but scant evidence available from Persian sources directly.[22]

As the third chapter of this report deals directly with the revolt of the Persian nobles against the usurper Magi and the ascension of Darius to the throne, it is worth noting scholars' arguments concerning the relationship between Herodotus' version of this account and another well known source of information for these events, the Behistun inscription. Scholars have long turned to the Behistun inscription, the official Achaemenid account of the fall of the Magi and ascension of Darius, in an effort to discover the sources for Herodotus' narrative of these events.[23] Though the historian does not name a source for his *logos*, there are both parallels and discrepancies between these two texts that have served as fodder for scholarly debate. Fehling treats the historian's relation to the Behistun text only indirectly, but expresses surprise when Herodotus agrees with the monumental version of events in a detail as simple as the number of conspirators.[24] Cook maintains that the "mistakes" that the historian makes in his *logos* demonstrate that he certainly did not know of this inscription and instead crafts his

[22] Briant's (1996) landmark analysis of the rise of the Persian Empire up to the time of Alexander is notable in this regard. Briant makes extensive use of Greek literary sources, including Herodotus, while comparing these accounts with archaeological, textual, and epigraphic evidence available from the Persian perspective. Likewise, scholars have long compared Herodotus' use of Persian words and names in an effort to explain the discrepancies that arise between Greek and Persian accounts, v., e.g., Schmitt (1969) and (1976), Armayor (1978a) and (1978b), Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1988) and (1989), and Mandell (1990). These analyses are largely critical and argue that Herodotus' errors in rendering Persian words and names demonstrate his lack of access to or lack of interest in gathering information directly from Persian sources.
[23] For general studies on the relationship between Herodotus' account and possible Persian sources, v. Pohlenz (1961); Waters (1985); and Hegyi (1973), pp. 73-87.
[24] Fehling (1971), pp. 160-61. Following Fehling's example, West (1985) analyzes Herodotus' explicit citation of epigraphic sources and argues that he is deliberately underhanded in his citation of inscriptions, belying his reliance instead upon, in her estimation, demonstrably false oral traditions. Pritchett (1993) refutes each of these scholars for their lack of comprehension of Herodotus' purpose and an understanding of his Eastern sources.

account from an oral tradition that derives from one of the Seven other than Darius.[25] Conversely, Balcer treats the relation between the prose text of Herodotus and its monumental counterpart at length and concludes that the historian derives his account from various Persian oral sources that each developed various details stemming from their knowledge of the Behistun inscription.[26] Balcer describes Herodotus' account of the fall of the Magi and the ascension of Darius as a puzzle fitted together from various pieces, which each has at its heart some understanding of the official Achaemenid monumental version of events. As this report is primarily concerned with the internal historiographic purposes for Herodotus' account of the Persian *nomoi*, the relationship between the historian and his sources for the Persian customs is largely incidental to our concern with his method of presentation and the utilization of this ethnography throughout the narrative of the *Histories*. The extent to which Herodotus strays from or remains loyal to his sources does not affect this analysis.

Instead of naming an external source for his account of the Persians' customs, Herodotus stresses his personal experience in learning about these practices. Herodotus hints at his autopsy of the Persian *nomoi* at two points within this ethnography. When he first breaks off from his description of Cyrus' ascension at the beginning of this *Exkurs*, Herodotus states: Πέρσας δὲ οἶδα νόμοισι τοιοῖσιδε χρεωμένους, "I know that the Persians practice the following customs" (1.131.1). Herodotus' choice of the verb οἶδα, a perfect tense form which bears the connotation of "I have seen," emphasizes both his

[25] Cook (1983), pp. 18-19; v. also Murray (1987) for the possibility of Herodotus' oral sources in Asia Minor.
[26] v. Balcer (1987), esp. pp. 157-66.

active role in attempting to discover the Persian customs for himself and his position as knowledgeable chronicler explicating information gained from his prior experiences. Thus, an alternative translation of the phrase above renders the historian's intended dual meaning: "I *have seen* the Persians *practicing* these customs *and thus know* that they practice them." After describing several facets of the Persian *nomoi* in chapters 1.131-39, Herodotus again emphasizes his personal familiarity with Persian customs: Ταῦτα μὲν ἀτρεκέως ἔχω περὶ αὐτῶν εἰδὼς εἰπεῖν, "I am able to speak accurately about these things, *having seen* them" (1.140.1). The adverb ἀτρεκέως stresses the accurate and precise nature of Herodotus' account.[27] The historian uses a participial form, εἰδὼς, of οἶδα to substantiate his ability to speak about the Persian *nomoi*; that is, because Herodotus has personally witnessed the Persians practicing these customs, he is able to discuss these *nomoi* accurately.

Herodotus closes his ethnography of the Persians with a topic for which he cannot express the same certainty. Before describing Persian customs regarding the dead, the historian claims: Τάδε μέντοι ὡς κρυπτόμενα λέγεται καὶ οὐ σαφηνέως περὶ τοῦ ἀποθανόντος, "The following matters concerning the dead, however, are not discussed openly but instead as though they are concealed" (1.140.1). Given that Herodotus claims that the Persian burial customs are not *discussed* in the open, he exposes that at least a portion of his examination of Persian customs was completed through an investigation into oral tradition. He maintains that these matters are treated as if they are concealed (ὡς κρυπτόμενα), not that the Persians are, in fact, completely furtive concerning their *nomoi*.

[27] v. LSJ, p. 272, II.1.

This claim demonstrates that Herodotus did gather information about Persian burial customs through oral inquiry. For several other notable ethnographic accounts Herodotus also stresses the verbal nature of his sources through the use of the verb πυνθάνομαι, "learn by oral inquiry."[28] However, as the historian turns next to discuss customs among the Magi concerning the dead, he again emphasizes his position as an eyewitness to the events. He claims: Μάγους μὲν γὰρ ἀτρεκέως οἶδα ταῦτα ποιεῦντας· ἐμφανέως γὰρ δὴ ποιεῦσι, "For I know for certain that the Magi do these things, for they do them in plain sight" (1.140.2). Through these references to his personal acquaintance with and oral investigation into these customs, Herodotus portrays himself as an actual eyewitness truthfully recording the *nomoi* of the Persians. The historian's claims of autopsy and oral inquiry reveal his method of gathering information for his description of the Persian customs and emphasize the personal experience that he had in seeing and being informed of the Persian *nomoi*.

This report examines Herodotus' use of the Persian ethnography in the *Histories* by undertaking an increasingly narrowed argument. Each successive chapter focuses more closely on the historian's treatment of these customs within his narrative. The first chapter analyzes the historian's presentation of the Persian *nomoi* in the first book of the *Histories*. Herodotus' account of the Persian ethnography (1.131-40) curiously stands out as one of the shortest of his ethnographies, though its subject is a nation that plays such a

[28] For this meaning, v. LSJ, svv πυνθάνομαι, p. 1554. For examples of oral inquiry in the ethnographic accounts, cf. Herodotus' comments on the Babylonians: πυνθάνομαι (1.196.1); Scythians: πυθέσθαι (4.81.1); and Thracians: πυθέσθαι (5.9.1).

major role in the historical narrative of the *Histories*.[29] Though this *Exkurs* seems undersized at first glance, both the context in which Herodotus places this ethnography and its influence on the later narrative history demonstrates the additional layers of meaning through which the historian intends this account to be understood. We will see how the historian develops the themes of differentiation and divergence between the Persians and the Greeks in an effort to define the customs of each and then utilizes a similar pattern of omission to distinguish further between the Magi and their Persian rulers.

The second chapter of this report then narrows its focus to examine in depth one facet of this ethnography, the Persians' educational trivium and the reappearance of these three elements throughout the *Histories*. The historian describes that from the ages of five to twenty, the Persians teach their youths three things: horsemanship, archery, and truth telling (ἱππεύειν καὶ τοξεύειν καὶ ἀληθίζεσθαι; 1.136.2). We will analyze how Herodotus evokes these three elements of the trivium at critical moments in the *Histories* to demonstrate a relationship between his description of the Persians' customs and their actions. The historian's presentation of these *nomoi* foregrounds the events of his later narrative and exhibits the link that Herodotus develops between the Persians' *nomoi* and the success that they achieve in their exploits.

The third chapter examines how Herodotus incorporates the three elements of the trivium into a single extended account, that of the fall of the Magi and ascension of

[29] The ethnography of the Persians (1.131-40) comprises only ten chapters, roughly equivalent to the ethnographies of the Babylonians (1.192-200) and the various peoples of Thrace (5.3-10) and in stark contrast to the lengthier ethnographies of the Egyptians (2.35-98), Scythians (4.59-82), and Libyans (4.168-96).

Darius. We will see how the historian continues the theme of divergence between the Persians and Magi, as established in the first chapter, to make clear that these two groups are distinct in terms of their *nomoi* and thus behave in divergent ways. Herodotus then takes care to describe how the Persians succeed only when they adhere to the elements of the trivium, thereby linking their victory over the Magi with their ability to demonstrate their knowledge and practice of truth telling, archery, and horsemanship.

This correlation between adherence to one's *nomoi* and one's success helps to explain Herodotus' purpose in crafting a text so laden with ethnographic data. Following his account of Cambyses' madness in the third book of the *Histories*, Herodotus relates a proleptic *Exkurs* that demonstrates his estimation of the relationship between custom and action. The historian describes how Darius summons a group of Greeks and a group of Indians to his court on two different occasions and asks each of them if they would be willing to practice the other's burial customs (3.38.3-4). The Greeks dismiss the thought of eating their dead, while the Indians, who do consume their deceased relatives, are appalled by Darius' suggestion that they burn the bodies instead. After establishing this contrast, Herodotus then records his opinion as to the significance of this divergence: Οὕτω μέν νυν ταῦτα νενόμισται, καὶ ὀρθῶς μοι δοκέει Πίνδαρος ποιῆσαι, «νόμον πάντων βασιλέα» φήσας εἶναι, "Since they practiced those customs at that time, Pindar seems to me to have put it correctly when he said: 'Custom is king of all'" (3.38.4).[30] The historian cites this fragment of Pindar to close his account of Darius' wish to demonstrate within

[30] Pindar fr. 152 (Bowra), 169 (Schneider). cf. Plut. *Dem.* 42.8.3 and Plato *Gorg.* 484b4. Thomas (2000), pp. 125-27, notes that Herodotus uses this quote in a different sense than Pindar's original implication. For an analysis of this fragment within Pindar's work, v. Heinemann (1945), pp. 67-68.

his court the disparity between the customs of the Greeks and those of the Indians. To Herodotus, this sentiment sums up his belief of the correlation between *nomos* and action, that is, that people live in obedience to their customs and would not consider adopting the *nomoi* of others. As his various accounts of Persians exhibiting their adherence to their customs will demonstrate, the success of an individual is defined by his obedience to his *nomoi*. First, however, we will analyze the placement of Herodotus' Persian ethnography in the first book of the *Histories* and see how it develops the theme of divergence between Greek and Persian customs.

I: Herodotus' Ethnography of the Persians

This chapter will analyze the context and themes of Herodotus' Persian ethnography in an effort to describe the method that the historian uses to explicate the Persians' customs. First, we will examine how the historian uses the conflict between Croesus and Cyrus as a framing point for his account of the Persian *nomoi*. Herodotus' narrative of the fall of the Lydian king and the rise of his Persian counterpart serves as the backdrop for his presentation of the Persian ethnography, thereby linking the Persians' customs with their ascendancy. Secondly, this chapter will analyze how Herodotus defines the Persian *nomoi* by contrasting them with the Greeks' customs. The historian's portrayal of Persian customs stresses the omissions which they exhibit from the standpoint of Hellenic practices. As Herodotus presents the individual elements of the Persian ethnography, he uses his account of these *nomoi* to draw clear distinctions between the Persians and the Greeks. Herodotus then recalls these customs that separate the Persians from the Hellenes at various points through his narrative account to reinforce the disparity that he demonstrates in the ethnography. Thus, the historian's account of the *nomoi* of the Persians foregrounds the later narrative of the *Histories*. Herodotus' evocation of these individual elements of the Persian ethnography throughout his later narrative will forecast the second chapter of this project, which will trace the three elements of the Persian educational practices throughout the *Histories*. Finally, this chapter will examine how Herodotus uses the same patterns of omission and disparity at the close of this ethnography to distinguish between the Persians and the Magi. This technique of emphasizing the omission of certain practices becomes a device that the

historian uses to articulate the "otherness" of the Persians. Building upon the previous scholarship that argues that Herodotus uses his descriptions of the "other" to establish the concept of self-definition among the Greeks, this chapter will show how this pattern of omission allows Herodotus to distinguish between the Persians and both the Greeks and the Magi.[31] The distinctions that the historian makes throughout the ethnography between the Greeks and Persians thereby inform his identification of the Magi as a distinct ethnic group from their Persian rulers, a division that will play an important role in his *logos* of the revolt of the Persian nobles against the usurper Magi, an account that will be analyzed in the third chapter of this report. This analysis of the Persian ethnography, however, will set the stage for the subsequent investigation into Persian educational customs by explicating how Herodotus ties the Persians' victories to their *nomoi* and how their practices distinguish them from both the Greeks and the Magi.

Herodotus places his depiction of the Persian *nomoi* at a crucial juncture in the first book of the *Histories*. This book largely consists of two *logoi*, those of the reigns of Croesus and Cyrus, interspersed with *Exkurse* that are largely analeptic and of varying lengths. The narrative of the actions of these two prominent kings allows the historian to analyze more fully the stated objective of his inquiry. As Herodotus states in the proem of the *Histories*, he undertakes this work due to his desire that human deeds be neither forgotten (ἐξίτηλα) nor without fame (ἀκλέα) and because he recognizes the vicissitude of human fortune.[32] The historian begins this explication of how states and individuals rise and fall in the first book of the *Histories* by contrasting the reigns of Croesus and

[31] For a discussion of the concept of Greek self-definition and "otherness" in Herodotus, v. pp. 5-6 above.
[32] 1.1 and 1.5.4, v. pp. 1-3, above.

Cyrus, each of whom will come to power and subsequently decline over the course of the narrative.[33] Herodotus claims that Croesus' role in subjugating the Asiatic Greeks prompts him to begin his *Histories* with the Lydian king: τὸν δὲ οἶδα αὐτὸς πρῶτον ὑπάρξαντα ἀδίκων ἔργων ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας, τοῦτον σημήνας προβήσομαι ἐς τὸ πρόσω τοῦ λόγου, "having discussed the one whom I know first undertook unjust acts against the Greeks, I will proceed forward in my narrative" (1.5.3).[34] This starting point highlights the historian's desire to focus on the rise and fall of individuals and nations, as he correlates Croesus' ascendancy with the defeat of the Ionian Greeks. As Herodotus advances through his *logos* of Lydian history, the focus of the narrative remains on Croesus until the historian reaches the fall of Sardis to the Persian army. At this point, Herodotus shifts his focus to Cyrus and the emergence of Persian power in the east.[35]

This description of the life of Cyrus and the rise of the Persian Empire in the latter part of the first book of the *Histories* is the immediate context for Herodotus' presentation of Persian customs.[36] Herodotus first turns his attention to the Persians only

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[33] There is no shortage of scholarship that analyzes the role that Croesus plays in book one and the larger picture of Herodotus' *Histories*. Pelling (2006), for instance, analyzes the first book of the *Histories* through a focus on Croesus' ability and inability to learn from historical experience. Marg (1953) describes Croesus' *Selbstsicherheit* ("self-assurance") as the central theme of the book and demonstrates that Croesus represents the first of several typical "eastern despots" who exemplify similar behaviors. Among these are Cyrus, Cambyses, Darius, and Xerxes. Scholars have also examined the role of Solon and his effect on Croesus, who, in turn, becomes an advisor to Persian kings, v., e.g., Regenbogen (1930), Schneeweiss (1975), and Shapiro (1996). For the larger theme of the "wise advisor" in the *Histories*, v. Lattimore (1939). For various interpretations of the force of Herodotus' choice to begin the *Histories* with the Lydian *logos*, v. Bernadette (1969), pp. 13-14; Schneeweiss (1975), pp. 164-65; Lang (1984), p. 3; Lateiner (1989), pp. 39, 43, 122; and Pelling (1997) *passim* and (2006), pp. 172-73.

[34] Herodotus continues in the next chapter (1.6) to describe Croesus' actions against the Asiatic Hellenes as justification for starting his narrative with Croesus.

[35] Pelling (2006), p. 154, n. 51, describes how Herodotus marks this shift in focus with a marked shift in grammatical subjects. Up to 1.74, "Croesus" predominates as the subject; from 1.75-78, Herodotus utilizes a mix of "Croesus" and "Cyrus," and from 1.79 forward, "Cyrus" stands out as the predominant grammatical subject.

[36] Herodotus' description of the life story of Cyrus comprises §§108-214 of the first book of the *Histories*.

after he describes how Cyrus' army captures Sardis and the aftermath of this defeat for the Lydians (1.84-94). The historian then looks back in time in an extended analeptic *Exkurs* that describes the Median kingship up to the time of Cyrus.[37] Herodotus then narrates the failed exposure of the infant Cyrus and his subsequent recognition by Astyages, the Median king and grandfather of the former who allows Cyrus to return to his parents in Persia (1.107-22). The historian then describes Cyrus' successful bid to lead the Persians in revolt against the Medes (1.123-30). The shift of power in the east from Media to Persia is the final element of the analepse, at which point Herodotus pauses to explain Persian customs. Before describing the Persian *nomoi*, however, the historian first ends the extended analepse by recalling where it began, as he notes that the fall of Sardis results in Cyrus ruling over all of Asia (πάσης τῆς Ἀσίης ἦρξε; 1.130.3). At this crucial juncture in Persian history Herodotus presents the Persian *nomoi*. Though the historian places other ethnographic accounts around a narrative of conflict involving those peoples, he ties only the Persian ethnography to the success of a non-Hellenic ethnos.[38] Herodotus' account of Persian *nomoi* is the only example of an ethnography that he frames on both sides with direct examples of the peoples' victories. Following this ethnography, the historian returns to the present in the narrative and describes the aftermath of the Persian defeat of the Lydians. Herodotus thereby uses his account of the

[37] In employing the terminology "analeptic *Excurse*," the author follows the "anachronical" construction of time and digression in the *Histories*, as described by I.J.F. de Jong (1999), pp. 230-41, and (2001). de Jong developed further the term "anachronies," first described by Genette (1980), pp. 35-36.

[38] Herodotus' other ethnographic accounts either precede a Persian attack against those peoples, as do those of the Egyptians (2.35-98) and Scythians (4.59-82), or follow their defeat at Persian hands, as do the accounts of the *nomoi* of the Babylonians (1.192-200) and the various peoples of Thrace (5.3-10). The historian's brief account of Lacedaemonian customs (1.65) during his account of archaic Greek history demonstrates a similar pattern of success as tied to *nomoi* as he next narrates the Spartans' eventual victory against the Tegeans (1.66-68).

emergence of Persian power, the commencement of Cyrus' kingship, and his victory over Croesus as framing elements that emphasize the link between the customs of the Persians and their triumphs. This connection between success and *nomos* becomes a recurring theme within the *Histories* as Herodotus will incorporate elements of the Persian ethnography at pivotal moments in his narrative. The historian begins this correlation by framing the Persian ethnography with his contrasting accounts of the changing fortunes of these two kings. Thus, Herodotus recounts the Persians' *nomoi* at the turning point of the first book of the *Histories*, a position which makes the ethnography the fulcrum upon which the historian balances his presentation of the vicissitudes of human fortune evident in the fall of Croesus and rise of Cyrus.

Within the ethnography itself, the historian depicts the Persian *nomoi* using consistent patterns. That Herodotus focuses his ethnographies on customs that are disparate from Greek practices is well attested.[39] This analysis of the Persian ethnography will reveal that the language that the historian uses to define their customs emphasizes what the Persians *omit* from their practices. This pattern of stressing omission over inclusion allows Herodotus to distinguish between Persian and Greek *nomoi*. In the first few sections of the ethnography, the historian explicitly differentiates between the customs of these two peoples by recording not only how their practices differ but the opinions they hold of each other's conventions. Herodotus then describes Persian

[39] Hartog (1988) famously describes this as Herodotus' effort to define the Greeks' customs by viewing them through the "mirror" of the Scythian *nomoi*, that through delineating the ethnography of the "other," the historian implicitly defines what it means to be Greek, v. esp. pp. 35-60 and 360-77; v. also Thomas (2000), pp. 75-134, and West (2002) in Bakker et al., pp. 437-56. E. Hall (1989) relies on Hartog's delineation of a "rhetoric of otherness" in demonstrating a similar trend in Attic tragedy. v. also the discussion on pp. 4-6, above.

customs that he will recall throughout the *Histories* to reinforce the distinctions he makes between the Greek and Persian practices. Finally, the historian closes his account of this ethnography using the same patterns of omission and divergence to distinguish more clearly between the Persians and the Magi, a distinction that will have an impact later in the *Histories*.

The first customs that Herodotus addresses in this ethnography are Persian religious practices.[40] Herodotus chooses not to begin his account of the Persian religious customs with what rites they perform, but rather with what they omit. He first describes the lack of physical structures used in their worship: ἀγάλματα μὲν καὶ νηοὺς καὶ βωμοὺς οὐκ ἐν νόμῳ ποιευμένους ἱδρύεσθαι, "they do not customarily establish statues, and shrines, and altars" (1.131.1).[41] These three elements of religious practice would have been very familiar to Herodotus' audience, given that these are typical components of Hellenic worship.[42] Hartog's analysis of the description of the Scythian *nomoi* in the fourth book of the *Histories* highlights how Herodotus uses his description of "the other" in his ethnographic material to allow his primarily Greek audience to relate more readily

[40] For a general discussion of Herodotus' treatment of foreign religions, v. Burkert (1990), pp. 1-39; Gould (1994).
[41] This assertion is markedly incorrect, v. A. de Jong (1997), pp. 110-13. Herodotus makes the same claim about the Scythians later in the *Histories*: Ἀγάλματα δὲ καὶ βωμοὺς καὶ νηοὺς οὐ νομίζουσι ποιέειν πλὴν Ἄρεϊ, "They are not accustomed to make statues, and shrines, and altars, except to Ares" (4.59.2).
[42] v. Burkert (1990), pp. 14-18, on the characteristically un-Greek nature of Herodotus' description of Persian practices; cf. Burn (1962), pp. 65-68, and Lateiner (1989), pp. 152-55. Georges (1994), pp. 54-58, describes how Herodotus here misrepresents Persian religious customs. Gould (1994), pp. 98ff, argues that Herodotus stresses ritual practices over beliefs; Harrison (2000), p. 213, tempers Gould's analysis slightly but notes how Herodotus focuses on ritual while commenting on the underlying beliefs in situations where he may have been given some explanation as to the viewpoint behind the practice. Harrison also notes that the distinction between "ritual" and "belief," as well as the emphasis placed on "belief" is a modern notion.

to the foreign cultures which he describes.[43] The Greeks' familiarity with the religious structures that the Persians omit prompts the historian's next statement in this ethnography:

> ἀλλὰ τοῖσι ποιεῦσι μωρίην ἐπιφέρουσι, ὡς μὲν ἐμοὶ δοκέειν, ὅτι οὐκ ἀνθρωποφυέας ἐνόμισαν τοὺς θεοὺς κατά περ οἱ Ἕλληνες εἶναι (1.131.1)
>
> But they charge those who do these things with folly because, as it seems to me, they do not believe that the gods have a human nature as do the Greeks.

Not only do the Persians observe religious customs disparate from the Greeks, but they also judge, in Herodotus' opinion, that Hellenic beliefs about anthropomorphic gods are foolishness. Although Herodotus often contrasts Persians customs with those of the Greeks, this is one of the few places where he describes the underlying belief behind the former's practices.[44] The historian thereby explicitly emphasizes the incongruity between Persian and Greek religious practices by recording not only the elements of worship that the former omit, but also their opinion of the latter's customs.

After the historian relates the dedicatees of the Persian's offerings (1.131.2), he continues to stress the portions of the sacrificial rites omitted from their practices:

> Θυσίη δὲ τοῖσι Πέρσῃσι περὶ τοὺς εἰρημένους θεοὺς ἥδε κατέστηκε. Οὔτε βωμοὺς ποιεῦνται οὔτε πῦρ ἀνακαίουσι μέλλοντες θύειν·
> οὐ σπονδῇ χρέωνται, οὐκὶ αὐλῷ, οὐ στέμμασι, οὐκὶ οὐλῇσι. (1.132.1)
>
> The following form of sacrifice prevails among the Persians for the aforementioned gods: they neither build altars nor kindle a fire when they

[43] Hartog (1988), v. esp. ch. 6 for his analysis of Herodotus' "rhetoric of otherness" through the use of the specific verbal cues, including difference/inversion and comparison/analogy. NB how Hartog demonstrates that the historian uses no more than two terms of comparison, thus even though Herodotus describes the Persians' and Scythians' lack of physical representations of deities in their worship, he does not compare the two directly, but rather contrasts each of them, in turn, with Greek customs.
[44] On this point, v. Mikalson (2003), p. 165.

> are about to sacrifice; they do not use libation, nor the flute, nor garlands, nor barley.

These elements of worship, like those discussed above, are common parts of Greek religion. The historian describes below (1.132.1-3), however, that a Persian who makes a sacrifice wears a tiara (τιήρην) and boils the meat (ἑψήσῃ τὰ κρέα), seemingly contradicting this claim. A. de Jong argues that Herodotus' description of the elements that the Persians exclude can only be understood in connection with the particular use of those elements within Greek worship.[45] de Jong argues that Herodotus is technically correct in that the Persians of the fifth century BCE did not "light" a fire (πῦρ ἀνακαίουσι) as part of their ritual, but rather carried the flame in the fire-vase.[46] Herodotus uses two different words for the garlands that he describes in these passages. He notes that the Persians do not wear laurel wreaths (στέμμασι), but instead a tiara made of myrtle branches (τιήρην μυρσίνῃ). The historian thereby stresses the slightest technical disparities between Greek and Persian worship.

At a later point in the ethnography, Herodotus returns to a very specific aspect of their religious customs, the veneration of rivers. As he did with their more general religious customs discussed above, the historian first explains what the Persians omit from their practices, namely, that they do not disrespect the rivers in various ways:

> ἐς ποταμὸν δὲ οὔτε ἐνουρέουσι οὔτε ἐμπτύουσι, οὐ χεῖρας ἐναπονίζονται οὐδὲ ἄλλον οὐδένα περιορῶσι, ἀλλὰ σέβονται ποταμοὺς μάλιστα. (1.138.2)

[45] A. de Jong (1997), pp. 110-13, provides a thorough analysis of this passage in light of our understanding of Persian worship.
[46] A. de Jong (1997), p. 111; v. also Briant (1996), pp. 256-62, for a description of the Persian rituals related to this passage and the practices of the fire-worship cult.

> They neither urinate nor spit into a river. They do not wash their hands in a river, nor allow any other person whatsoever to do so, but, above all, they worship rivers.

Herodotus describes how the Persians refuse to perform what would amount to basic hygienic practice among the Greeks. Moreover, since he stresses that they do not permit anyone else to urinate, spit, or wash their hands in rivers, Herodotus thus portrays these actions as *verboten* among the Persians. He then continues by stating that they venerate rivers. The verb σέβομαι conveys the connotation of religious worship, thus Herodotus' use of the term in this context clarifies that the Persians pay respect to rivers as divine entities and therefore the prohibited actions that he mentions above become acts of impiety in their view.[47] Though the historian does not provide further details about the form of the Persians' veneration of rivers, he does follow his established pattern of first noting the omissions from their customs. Herodotus therefore defines the Persian religious *nomoi* in multiple sections of his ethnography by describing the rites and routines that they do not perform, in an effort to distinguish more clearly between Persian and Greek customs.

In the passage of the ethnography that follows the Persian religious practices Herodotus continues to stress the disparity between Persian and Hellenic customs. The historian now turns to their gastronomic practices, noting discrepancies that he will evoke at a later moment in the narrative of the *Histories* and in a way that emphasizes his personal knowledge of Persian customs. After he describes the various types of meat served during the Persians' birthday feasts (1.133.1), the historian explains further details

[47] v. LSJ, p. 1588, meaning i.2-3 for the specifically religious connotations of this term.

about the manner in which they eat: Σίτοισι δὲ ὀλίγοισι χρέωνται, ἐπιφορήμασι δὲ πολλοῖσι καὶ οὐκ ἀλέσι, "they consume little bread, but many desserts and not all at once" (1.133.2). A meal abounding in meats and desserts but wanting for bread would have indeed seemed foreign and opulent to the historian's Greek audience. Herodotus recalls this disparity between Greek and Persian eating habits in his description of the aftermath of the battle of Plataea. Pausanias, having inspected Mardonius' tent, orders the Persian cooks to prepare a customary meal that they would serve to the Persian general (9.82.1). The historian then notes Pausanias' reaction to this sumptuous feast:

> τὸν Παυσανίην ἰδόντα...παρασκευὴν μεγαλοπρεπέα τοῦ δείπνου, ἐκπλαγέντα τὰ προκείμενα ἀγαθὰ κελεῦσαι ἐπὶ γέλωτι τοὺς ἑωυτοῦ διηκόνους παρασκευάσαι Λακωνικὸν δεῖπνον. Ὡς δὲ τῆς θοίνης ποιηθείσης ἦν πολλὸν τὸ μέσον (9.82.2-3)
>
> Pausanias saw the magnificent preparation of the meal, was amazed at the good things that were set out and ordered his servants to prepare a Laconian meal as a joke. When the feast was prepared, the discrepancy was great.

Herodotus then describes how Pausanias gathers the Greek generals together to view the contrast between Hellenic and Persian customs and ridicules Xerxes for wishing to deprive the Greeks of this way of life (9.82.3). Near the end of his narrative, then, the historian recalls the divergence between the Persians' and Greeks' gastronomic customs that he had established in the first book of the *Histories*.

To return to our analysis of the ethnography, Herodotus again uses the disparity between the Persians' and Greeks' customs as an opportunity to describe the former's opinion regarding the latter's customs:

> καὶ διὰ τοῦτό φασι Πέρσαι τοὺς Ἕλληνας σιτεομένους πεινῶντας παύεσθαι, ὅτι σφι ἀπὸ δείπνου παραφορέεται οὐδὲν λόγου ἄξιον, εἰ δέ τι παραφέροιτο, ἐσθίοντας ἂν οὐ παύεσθαι. (1.133.2)
>
> For this reason the Persians say that the Greeks stop eating while they are still hungry, because nothing worth note is served to them after the meal, and if anything else should be served, they would not stop eating.

For a second time the historian articulates a Persian opinion regarding Hellenic *nomoi*.[48] In the above example, regarding the physical representations of deities in the Greek and Persian religious practices, Herodotus describes both the Persians' judgment about Hellenic practice as well as his own explanation for that attitude. Here, however, the historian expresses the Persians' reasoning for their opinion. The vivid way in which Herodotus describes the feast above, when combined with this statement of Persian rationale, suggests that the historian wishes to portray himself subtly as a convivial guest of the Persians at such a birthday feast, depicting how they shared with him both their food and their judgment concerning Greek customs. In this section of the ethnography that addresses Persian eating habits, Herodotus again stresses the disparity between the *nomoi* practiced by the Persians and the customs of his audience and takes this opportunity to express the former's opinion of the latter's practices. Furthermore, the historian uses his later narrative to highlight this separation, thus demonstrating that he uses the ethnography to foreground the events that he recounts at other moments in the *Histories*.

[48] Herodotus here as at 1.131 reflects Persian opinion of Greek practice, just as he does when he shares Cyrus' disparagement of the Spartan civic practices (1.153), a passage that will be analyzed in the second chapter below.

Following the historian's discussion of Persian gastronomic customs, he continues to highlight the disparity between Hellenic and Persian *nomoi* by describing a social custom that is fraught with misapprehension among the Greeks. This social practice will again provide Herodotus with the opportunity to foreground subsequent events in his narrative. He recalls these customs in later portions of the *Histories* to stress the distinctions he makes between Hellenic and Persian *nomoi* as he describes Persians committing the acts that Greeks explicitly refuse to do. Herodotus presents Persian forms of social greeting as follows:

> Ἐντυγχάνοντες δ' ἀλλήλοισι ἐν τῇσι ὁδοῖσι, τῷδε ἄν τις διαγνοίη εἰ ὅμοιοί εἰσι οἱ συντυγχάνοντες· ἀντὶ γὰρ τοῦ προσαγορεύειν ἀλλήλους φιλέουσι τοῖσι στόμασι. Ἢν δὲ ᾖ οὕτερος ὑποδεέστερος ὀλίγῳ, τὰς παρειὰς φιλέονται. Ἢν δὲ πολλῷ ᾖ οὕτερος ἀγεννέστερος, προσπίπτων προσκυνέει τὸν ἕτερον. (1.134.1)
>
> But when they meet each other in the streets, in the following way one can discern if those who meet each other are of equal rank: for instead of addressing each other by name, they kiss each other on the mouth. But if one is of slightly lower rank than the other, they kiss on the cheek. If, instead, one is much lower born than the other, he falls down in supplication and prostrates himself before the other.

The first line of this passage demonstrates the didactic purpose behind Herodotus' presentation of this *nomos*, as he indicates that this knowledge will allow one to distinguish (τις διαγνοίη) between the various classes of the highly stratified Persian society.[49] The historian then continues the trope of portraying Persian customs by contrasting them with Greek practices. He describes how the former do not address (ἀντὶ τοῦ προσαγορεύειν) each other, before he explains their actual greeting practice,

[49] v. Briant (1996), pp. 314-66, esp. 344-46 and 361-62, for a discussion of Persian social hierarchy and its importance within the royal court.

something akin to the Italian *bacio*.[50] Herodotus' use of the verb προσαγορεύω, a term which bears strong sociopolitical connotations for the Greeks, demonstrates how different the Persians are from the historian's audience.[51] The etymological connection between this verb that the historian uses here and the agora, the center of Greek public life, demonstrates how characteristically "Greek" a greeting by προσαγόρευσις is.[52] Herodotus thereby distinguishes between Hellenic social customs and those of the Persians by first noting what the latter omit.

In the above passage Herodotus also describes the practice of proskynesis, a form of social greeting practiced between Persians of vastly different social classes or performed before the Great King.[53] The process of proskynesis is performed by the inferior individual who bows prostrate on the ground before his superior, an action which, to the Greeks, constituted self-abasement.[54] At several points in the *Histories*, Herodotus recalls this practice, describing how various Persians prostrate themselves before the Great King. Harpagos, called before Astyages to answer for the sudden reappearance of Cyrus, prostrates himself (προσκυνήσας) after hearing the king's

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[50] Briant (1996), pp. 321 and 346, describes the use of the "greeting kiss" within the Persian social hierarchy.

[51] προσαγορεύω is a compounded form of ἀγορεύω (v. LSJ, p. 13) a denominative verb derived from ἀγορά.

[52] For the Persian viewpoint of the Greek agora, v. Hdt. 1.153, in which Cyrus expresses his disdain for the *agora*, cf. pp. 47-49, below.

[53] v. Briant (1996), pp. 234-36, for a discussion of the practice of proskynesis. Briant analyzes the supposed discrepancy between Herodotus' depiction of proskynesis and official royal reliefs and shows how this inconsistency is solved through careful analysis of the texts and the figures in the reliefs. There are multiple forms of proskynesis depicted in official reliefs, the simplest appearing to consist of the inferior leaning forward and blowing a kiss toward the superior; v. also Frye (1972) and E. Hall (1989), pp. 96-96.

[54] The Greeks only practice this most extreme form of proskynesis before representations of divinity, v. Harrison (2000), p. 219. E. Hall (1989), pp. 90-91 and 96-97, discusses the misconception that the Persian practice constituted recognition of the divinity of the Great King. This fallacy has been constructed through an extrapolation from the Greek literary sources which themselves misrepresent the custom, cf., e.g., Arr. *Anab*. iv.9-11.

supposedly favorable response to his explanation (1.119.1).[55] When Darius is recognized as king for the first time, Herodotus describes the Persian nobles dismounting from their horses and prostrating themselves before Darius (3.86.2). This passage will be analyzed fully and within its context in the third chapter. Herodotus' descriptions of the Persian practice of proskynesis before mortals stand at odds with Greek customs and each time he recounts this tradition, he further stresses the disparity between Hellenic and Persian *nomoi*.

As Herodotus relates the aftermath of the Battle of Salamis, he recounts what he believes is a dubious account that includes the Persian practice of proskynesis. The historian's explanation as to why he doubts this story, however, reveals the reason that he includes it. Herodotus recounts two versions of Xerxes' return to Sardis, the first by land and the second by sea (8.115-20). In the naval *nostos* that the historian recounts, Xerxes' ship becomes engulfed in a storm and is in danger of sinking. The helmsman suggests that they will only survive if the ship is lightened, upon which Xerxes requests that the Persians on board throw themselves into the water (8.118.2-3). The men on the deck of the ship then demonstrate their veneration for their king: τοὺς δὲ προσκυνέοντας ἐκπηδᾶν ἐς τὴν θάλασσαν, "these men prostrated themselves and leapt out into the sea" (8.118.4). Though Herodotus calls this account into question, his rationale for doubting this story hints at the reason for its inclusion within the *Histories*:

> Εἰ γὰρ δὴ ταῦτα οὕτω εἰρέθη ἐκ τοῦ κυβερνήτεω πρὸς Ξέρξην, ἐν μυρίῃσι γνώμῃσι μίαν οὐκ ἔχω ἀντίξοον μὴ οὐκ ἂν ποιῆσαι βασιλέα τοιόνδε, τοὺς

[55] Though Astyages will trick Harpagos into consuming portions of his own son (1.119), an act which prompts the latter to encourage Cyrus to revolt against the king (1.123-24), Harpagos' initial response to honor Astyages through proskynesis is due to the king's feigned clemency.

> μὲν ἐκ τοῦ καταστρώματος καταβιβάσαι ἐς κοίλην νέα, ἐόντας Πέρσας καὶ Περσέων τοὺς πρώτους, τῶν δ' ἐρετέων, ἐόντων Φοινίκων, ὅκως οὐκ ἂν ἴσον πλῆθος τοῖσι Πέρσῃσι ἐξέβαλε ἐς τὴν θάλασσαν. (8.119.1)
>
> For if indeed these things were thus said by the helmsman to Xerxes, I maintain that not one among ten thousand opinions would say that the king did not do as follows, that instead he would send them down from the deck to the hold of the ship, since they are Persians and the foremost among the Persians, and would have thrown out into the sea a number of others, being Phoenician, equal to the number of the Persians.

Herodotus makes it clear that he questions the veracity of this story not because the supposed proskynesis and self-sacrifice of the Persian nobles are implausible, but rather on the grounds that Xerxes' failure to save his own countrymen by instead sacrificing the Phoenicians makes the account suspect. The historian's expression of his doubt thereby suggests that he recounts this tale not just to record an alternative version of the story of Xerxes' return, but instead because it offers him the opportunity to describe the proskynesis carried out by the Persian nobles in veneration of their king and an occasion to express the Great King's relations with the Persian elite. Thus, the inclusion of this dubious account allows Herodotus to record another example of proskynesis and thereby continue his exposition of the disparity between Greek and Persian social practices.

The Persian practice of proskynesis before the king or other individual of vastly superior social rank particularly troubled the Greeks, as Herodotus demonstrates in an anecdote recorded as an *Exkurs* within the narrative of Xerxes' expedition to Greece. The historian first describes how the Spartans become vexed by the wrath of Talthybios for the murder of Darius' heralds (7.133-34). In order to atone for this impropriety, the Spartans determine that the best course of action is to send two volunteers to the Persians to offer themselves to Xerxes as reparation for the Spartans' crime. When these two men

reach Susa and enter the court of the Great King, Herodotus evokes the custom of proskynesis by describing these Greeks' refusal to practice it:

> πρῶτα μὲν τῶν δορυφόρων κελευόντων καὶ ἀνάγκην σφι προσφερόντων προσκυνέειν βασιλέα προσπίπτοντας οὐκ ἔφασαν ὠθεόμενοι πρὸς αὐτῶν ἐπὶ κεφαλὴν ποιήσειν ταῦτα οὐδαμά οὔτε γάρ σφι ἐν νόμῳ εἶναι ἄνθρωπον προςκυνέειν οὔτε κατὰ ταῦτα ἥκειν (7.136.1)
>
> At first, although the bodyguards ordered them and even used force against them to fall down in supplication and prostrate themselves before the king, the [Spartans] said that they would do no such thing, even if they were forced down headfirst by the guards, for it was neither their custom to prostrate themselves before a human being, nor did they come for these reasons.

The historian relates how the guards order the Spartans to show obeisance to Xerxes and how the latter resist even the physical force used by the Persian soldiers who attempted to coerce the Greeks to perform proskynesis. To describe the guards' use of force against the Spartans, Herodotus uses the noun ἀνάγκη, a word which implies both necessity and compulsion exerted by a superior, perhaps through physical torture or violence.[56] The historian describes the Persians' efforts using concessive participles, κελευόντων and προσφερόντων, strengthening the impact of the Spartans' refusal. Though the Persians use force against the Greeks in their attempt to push (ὠθεόμενοι) them to the ground, the guards are unsuccessful in this effort. The dual reference to the attempted physical coercion (ἀνάγκην and ὠθεόμενοι) enhances the sense that the Spartans will refuse to prostrate themselves before the king regardless of the demands made. Herodotus then relates the Greeks' rationale behind their rejection of proskynesis. These Spartans claim that they will not prostrate themselves before any human being (ἄνθρωπον), thereby

[56] v. LSJ, p. 101, meanings 3a and 3b.

emphasizing their viewpoint that the act of proskynesis should only be performed in the presence of divinity.[57] The final aspect of the Spartans' refusal to prostrate themselves before the Great King is their assertion that they did not come to do so. Their insistence in this matter evokes their true purpose for visiting Xerxes, to whom they will offer their lives in expiation of the wrath of Talthybios.[58] Thus, the Spartans make clear that they are willing to die, but not to show obeisance in this way in the Persian court. The refusal of the Spartans to practice proskynesis before the Persian provides Herodotus with corroboration for his claim that the Persians and the Greeks act differently in this regard. Throughout the *Histories*, he accumulates examples of Persians prostrating themselves before their King, in an act that the Greeks would not perform even under the compulsion of physical force, as the example of these Spartans demonstrates. Thus, Herodotus uses the narrative of his work to reveal further the disparity between Greek and Persian customs that he sets out in the latter's ethnography.

In the generation following Herodotus, the Greeks' freedom from the practice of proskynesis takes on additional meaning. Xenophon's *Anabasis* records a judgment about the custom that very likely circulated among the Greeks following the Persian War. As the Ten Thousand deliberate a course of action following Cyrus' defeat, Xenophon, as one of the five newly elected generals, expresses this sentiment:

> ἔπειτα ὅτε Ξέρξης ὕστερον ἀγείρας τὴν ἀναρίθμητον στρατιὰν ἦλθεν ἐπὶ τὴν Ἑλλάδα, καὶ τότε ἐνίκων οἱ ἡμέτεροι πρόγονοι τοὺς τούτων προγόνους καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλατταν. ὧν ἔστι μὲν τεκμήρια ὁρᾶν τὰ τρόπαια, μέγιστον δὲ μαρτύριον ἡ ἐλευθερία τῶν πόλεων ἐν αἷς ὑμεῖς

[57] v. n. 53, p. 26, above.
[58] The Spartans' speech to Xerxes which Herodotus quotes directly makes explicit mention of this purpose. Though the Great King releases the Spartans from this obligation, their intentions are made clear (7.136.2-137).

> ἐγένεσθε καὶ ἐτράφητε· οὐδένα γὰρ ἄνθρωπον δεσπότην ἀλλὰ τοὺς θεοὺς προσκυνεῖτε. (3.2.13)
>
> Afterwards, when Xerxes gathered the innumerable army and came to Greece, at that time our ancestors prevailed over theirs both by land and by sea. Seeing the trophies is proof of these things, but the greatest witness is the freedom of the cities in which you were born and raised: for you prostrate yourselves before no man as master, but instead before the gods.

Xenophon's speech makes direct reference to Xerxes' campaign against Hellas, recalling the Greeks' victories at Plataea, Salamis, and Mycale (καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλατταν), thus overtly evoking Herodotus' account of the Persian Wars. Xenophon then follows this allusion to the *Histories* with the claim that the greatest representation of the Greeks' triumph over the Persians is their exemption from the ritual of proskynesis. Herodotus and Xenophon both describe the Hellenic attitude toward self-abasement through prostrating oneself as a matter appropriate only before the gods. Xenophon's indirect reference to the *Histories* demonstrates the persistence of the Hellenic attitude toward proskynesis, an opinion that Herodotus methodically defines, first through his account of the Persian ethnography and then secondly throughout his narrative in which he records multiple examples of the Persians' willingness to practice proskynesis and the Greeks' refusal to do so.

Herodotus' discussion of the Greeks' reluctance to practice proskynesis adds further meaning to the subsequent section of his Persian ethnography. The historian continues his account of the Persian *nomoi* by describing their attitude toward neighboring peoples and noting that the Persians exhibit a sense of geographical relativism in their opinions of others:

> Τιμῶσι δὲ ἐκ πάντων τοὺς ἄγχιστα ἑωυτῶν οἰκέοντας μετά γε ἑωυτούς, δεύτερα δὲ τοὺς δευτέρους, μετὰ δὲ κατὰ λόγον προβαίνοντες τιμῶσι· ἥκιστα δὲ τοὺς ἑωυτῶν ἑκαστάτω οἰκημένους ἐν τιμῇ ἄγονται (1.134.2)
>
> They esteem those that live nearest to them above all, after themselves at any rate, and secondly those that are the next closest, and advancing thence, they esteem others according to this reasoning: those living the furthest from them are held in honor the least of all.

This prompts Herodotus to take note of their willingness to implement foreign *nomoi*: ξεινικὰ δὲ νόμαια Πέρσαι προσίενται ἀνδρῶν μάλιστα, "of all men the Persians especially adopt foreign customs" (1.135.1).[59] The historian uses the word order of this description to emphasize two important points. First, Herodotus begins this remark with the adjective ξεινικὰ, putting stress on the fact that the *nomoi* which the Persians adopt so readily are acquired from other peoples. Secondly, the historian closes the thought with the superlative adverb μάλιστα, thus concluding the remark with the image that the Persians more so than any other nation adopt foreign customs. Herodotus consequently accentuates the Persians' separation from others in the way in which he records their willingness to practice foreign *nomoi*. The historian then provides three concrete examples of customs that the Persians have adopted:

> Καὶ γὰρ δὴ τὴν Μηδικὴν ἐσθῆτα νομίσαντες τῆς ἑωυτῶν εἶναι καλλίω φορέουσι καὶ ἐς τοὺς πολέμους τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους θώρηκας. Καὶ εὐπαθείας τε παντοδαπὰς πυνθανόμενοι ἐπιτηδεύουσι καὶ δὴ καὶ ἀπ' Ἑλλήνων μαθόντες παισὶ μίσγονται. (1.135.1)
>
> For they wear Median clothing, considering that it is more beautiful than their own and they also wear Egyptian breastplates in war. They inquire into and practice enjoyments of all sorts and in particular they have intercourse with children, which they learned from the Greeks.

[59] Asheri (1988), p. 345, describes how this attitude of the Persians toward foreign *nomoi* presents them as the antithesis to the Egyptians and Scythians, who are described as adverse to foreign practices, v. Hdt. 2.91 and 4.76, respectively.

The historian provides the rationale for why the Persians implement Median clothing, claiming that it is because of its aesthetic superiority to their own. He does not, however, explicitly describe why the Persians adopt the Egyptian breastplates.[60] Herodotus has a different motive behind sharing this implementation of Egyptian armor by the Persians. In this description, the historian moves from the people nearest to the Persians (the Medes) to the farthest (the Greeks). The placement of his mention of the Egyptians in the midst of these two extremes strengthens the parallel between this passage and the account of the Persians' geographical relativism mentioned just above. Herodotus thereby tempers his account of the Persians' attitude toward their neighbors with his mention of their willingness to adopt customs from even the most remote peoples. The historian also recalls the Hellenic custom of pederasty in the passage analyzed above and claims that the Persians adopted this practice from the Greeks.[61] Regardless of the veracity of this statement, Herodotus makes this claim in order to contrast the Persians' willingness to learn pederasty from the Greeks with the latter's refusal to practice proskynesis, a common social practice among the former. The discrepancy evident between these two peoples' attitude toward the adoption of foreign customs—the one showing enthusiasm, the other reluctance—advances Herodotus' explanation of the distinction between the Greeks and the Persians. Even as the Persians adopt a social custom of the Greeks they

[60] Though there is no direct mention of Egyptian breastplates in the *Histories* after this passage, the armor mentioned in Herodotus' description of the Persian armament (7.61) is described as having fish-like iron scales (λεπίδος σιδηρέης ὄψιν ἰχθυοειδέος). Following Biel's amendment to this problematic passage, this could refer to these Egyptian breastplates used by the Persians. Briant (1996), pp. 554-56, discusses the Persian armor used on the campaign of Xerxes, but does not consider any possible Egyptian connection.
[61] v. Sergent (1986), pp. 192-98, for the Persian practice of pederasty. Briant (1996), p. 944, doubts that this extends beyond references to a few rare cases involving court eunuchs.

still demonstrate the disparity with their Hellenic counterparts in their very willingness to implement a foreign custom.

Herodotus continues to explicate the divergence between Greek and Persian practices when he turns to their domestic policies. Before the historian explains how the Persians raise and educate their children, he first describes the rationale behind their admiration of prolific fathers and foregrounds a theme that will play an important role in the later narrative of the *Histories*.[62] Herodotus relates how the birth of children provides distinction for Persian men: Ἀνδραγαθίη δὲ αὕτη ἀποδέδεκται, μετὰ τὸ μάχεσθαι εἶναι ἀγαθόν, ὃς ἂν πολλοὺς ἀποδέξῃ παῖδας, "this virtue of manliness is approved, after being brave in battle, for he who begets many children" (1.136.1). Herodotus thus claims that the Persians hold the production of progeny as the second best measure of excellence that a man might attain. The historian's next observation clarifies the reason behind the Persians' veneration of prolific childbirth: τῷ δὲ τοὺς πλείστους ἀποδεικνύντι δῶρα ἐκπέμπει βασιλεὺς ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος· τὸ πολλὸν δ' ἥγηνται ἰσχυρὸν εἶναι, "to the one who produces the most children throughout the entire year, the king sends forth gifts: they believe that the multitude is strong" (1.136.1). The Persians' belief of trusting in their "strength in numbers" plays a significant role in their strategy during Xerxes' grand campaign against Greece.[63] Herodotus reveals a constant concern for the enumeration of Greek and Persian forces, both those arrayed against one another before battle and the casualties counted afterward.[64] The historian often explicates the disparity between the

[62] The threefold system of Persian education in truth telling, archery, and horsemanship (1.136.2) will not be discussed further here because it is the subject of full analysis in the following chapters.
[63] Hammond (1988) provides a thorough discussion of the many complicated facets of this campaign.
[64] v., e.g., 6.117, 7.60, 7.184-7, 7.202-03, 8.1-2, 8.100, 9.28-32.

sizes of the Greek and Persian armies, an evocation made most clear by his description of the forces at Thermopylae.[65] Herodotus, having enumerated the various contingents of the Persian army, arrives at over five million fighting men arrayed on Xerxes' side (7.184-87).[66] Just a few thousand Greeks oppose this multitudinous host in the pass at Thermopylae (7.202). The historian claims that Xerxes expresses disbelief that so few Greeks would fight against his vast army: ἐπειρώτα ὅντινα τρόπον τοσοῦτοι ἐόντες τῇ ἑωυτοῦ στρατιῇ μαχήσονται, "[Xerxes] asked in what way the [Greeks], being so few, will fight against his own army" (7.209.5). As the fighting ensues, Herodotus describes how the Hellenic army inflicted many casualties upon the Persians and explains the reason for the Greeks' success: δῆλον δ' ἐποίευν παντί τεῳ καὶ οὐκ ἥκιστα αὐτῷ βασιλέϊ ὅτι πολλοὶ μὲν ἄνθρωποι εἶεν, ὀλίγοι δὲ ἄνδρες, "they made it clear to everyone and especially to the king himself that although [the Persians] were many, few of them were men" (7.210.2). Herodotus thus portrays the Greeks' success over the Persians as a feat dependent on quality rather than quantity, a depiction that recalls and disputes the Persians' claim that they demonstrate ἀνδραγαθίη through valor in battle (1.136.1). The historian goes on to describe Xerxes as "at a loss" (ἀπορέοντος δὲ βασιλέος; 7.213.1) to explain the Persians' lack of progress in the first two days of fighting. Though the Greeks would eventually succumb to the Persians, Herodotus makes clear that Xerxes' army was unable to conquer the Greeks due to the Persians' numerical superiority alone. Only

[65] For a complete analysis of the preparation, the conflict itself, and the aftermath of the battle of Thermopylae, v. Bradford (1980) and Cartledge (2006).

[66] Many scholars have discussed the absurdity of this number, made evident through a number of concerns, but most notably contradicting archaeological evidence, vastly smaller population estimates for Persian territories, and logistical impossibilities. For estimates of the actual size of Xerxes' force, based on thorough analysis of both textual and archaeological evidence, v. Young (1980); Hammond (1988), pp. 532-35; Lazenby (1993), pp. 90-96. The estimates nevertheless vary widely.

through Ephialtes' betrayal in revealing the Anopaia path, which allows the Persians to encircle the remaining Greeks in the pass, does Xerxes achieve victory at Thermopylae (7.213-25). The historian's portrayal in his ethnography of how the Persians rely on their "strength in numbers" accordingly foregrounds the events which will occur during Xerxes' campaign and justifies the significance which the Persians place on producing numerous children. In recalling the theme of Persian reliance upon the multitude at this pivotal moment in his narrative, Herodotus further demonstrates the disparity between Persian and Hellenic customs as he describes the myriad nations of the Persian Empire arrayed against a few thousand Greeks at Thermopylae.

Throughout his ethnography of the Persians, Herodotus carefully stresses the divergence between Greek and Persian customs by noting what the latter fails to do. In the later narrative of the *Histories*, he corroborates his claims as to the disparity between Hellenic and Persian practices by demonstrating how each group acts as the *nomoi* that he sets out in the ethnography predict. In the final passage of his account of the Persian *nomoi*, Herodotus discusses their burial practices. The historian's treatment of these practices helps clarify his stance on the identity of the Magi, as he follows patterns similar to his portrayal of Greek and Persian customs established above. As previously noted, the historian hints at his sources in this passage, providing valuable evidence for the origins of his knowledge of Persian customs, if we are willing to believe his claims.[67] Herodotus claims that it is difficult to discover sure information about some elements of Persian burial customs, but posits the following detail: ὡς οὐ πρότερον θάπτεται ἀνδρὸς

[67] v. pp. 8-10, above.

Πέρσεω ὁ νέκυς πρὶν ἂν ὑπ' ὄρνιθος ἢ κυνὸς ἑλκυσθῇ, "for instance, the corpse of a Persian man is not buried before it has been torn apart by a bird or dog" (1.140.1).[68] Herodotus does not accept this report of Persian customs, but instead recounts the practice to contrast the Persians with the Magi. The historian casts doubt upon this statement, both with the uncertainty with which he introduced the topic of burial customs and with the account that follows:

> Μάγους μὲν γὰρ ἀτρεκέως οἶδα ταῦτα ποιεῦντας· ἐμφανέως γὰρ δὴ ποιεῦσι. Κατακηρώσαντες δὲ ὦν τὸν νέκυν Πέρσαι γῇ κρύπτουσι (1.140.2)
>
> For I know for certain that the Magi do these things, for they do them in plain sight. But the Persians bury a corpse in the earth having first covered it in wax.

The historian claims above to be uncertain about Persian funerary practices and yet speaks confidently about the customs of the Magi. Herodotus therefore explicitly differentiates between the Magi and the Persians here in his account of their burial customs. He then strengthens this distinction by recounting a completely discrete form of inhumation practiced among the Persians which involves first covering the body in wax.[69] Herodotus therefore uses these distinctions between the funerary practices of the Persians and the Magi to accentuate the divergence between these two peoples, as he had done earlier in the ethnography with the disparity between Hellenic and Persian customs.

[68] cf. Strabo XV.3.20. Briant (1996), pp. 106-07, treats Persian burial practices and notes that, although the Magi allow cadavers to be mutilated by birds or dogs, inhumation is considered the normal practice among the Persians.

[69] cf. Hdt. IV.71 for an account of the use of wax to cover Scythian kings before burial. Asheri (1988), p. 347, suggests that the Persian practice of embalming with wax was reserved for royalty and nobles. Briant (1996), p. 539, suggests that this practice bears resemblance to Spartan customs.

The historian closes his account of the Persian ethnography with this differentiation to draw his audience's attention to this distinction.

The identity of the Magi within the *Histories* is problematic, at best.[70] Herodotus claims that they are one of the six tribes of the Medes (1.101.1) and indeed depicts the Magi serving the function of dream interpreters within Astyages' court.[71] However, they also serve this function under Xerxes' rule when they interpret one of his dreams as a sign that he will rule over the whole earth (7.19). Although the Magi turn Astyages against the infant Cyrus (1.107-08) and wrongly usurp the throne from Cambyses (3.61), Herodotus describes their role in performing important sacrificial rites within Xerxes' court and also explains their responsibility in general religious practices at an earlier point in the ethnography.[72] Herodotus even stresses the importance of the Magi to Persian sacrifices: ἄνευ γὰρ δὴ μάγου οὔ σφι νόμος ἐστὶ θυσίας ποιέεσθαι, "for it is not their custom to make sacrifices without a Magus" (1.132.3). The problem with identifying the Magi in the *Histories* is that Herodotus fails to explain why a group explicitly associated with the Medes serves such vital functions within the Persian court.[73] The historian uses

[70] v. Asheri (1988), p. 347, for more information about the problematic nature of the Magi and the term *magos* in Herodotus' work and intellectual milieu. v. Briant (1996), pp. 255-58, for a description of the largely religious function of the Magi within the Persian court. v. A. de Jong (1997), pp. 35-39 and 85-91, for an introduction to the problematic identity of the Magi in Greek literature and how Herodotus' attempt to define foreign religion as a subset of *nomoi* clouds his description of the Magi.

[71] For the Magi as dream interpreters in the Median court: 1.107-08, 1.120, and 1.128.

[72] Herodotus describes the Magi presiding over sacrifices and libations: 7.43.2, 113.2-114.1, and 191.2. Briant (1996), pp. 255-58 and 260-62, discusses the role of the Magi as cult officials under the Persian Empire. For the usurpation of the throne by the Magi and the Persian nobles' revolt against them, see the third chapter which will analyze this account in light of the historian's depiction of the Persian educational customs.

[73] On the explicit association between the Magi and the Medes, v. 1.101.1, in which Herodotus describes the Magi as one of the six Median tribes; and 3.65, in which Cambyses, recognizing that the Magi have revolted against him, exhorts the Persian nobles not to let the kingship fall back into the hands of the Medes: μὴ περιιδεῖν τὴν ἡγεμονίην αὖτις ἐς Μήδους περιελθοῦσαν (3.65.6).

his descriptions of the burial customs of the Magi to accentuate their separation from the Persians and to alleviate the complications arising from the imprecise nature of the Magi's identity in the narrative of the *Histories*. Herodotus' purpose in drawing these explicit distinctions between these two peoples will become clear in the account of Darius' ascension to the throne, which begins with the revolt of the seven Persian nobles against the two imposter Magi who wrongly possess the kingship. This passage will be analyzed fully and in its context in the third chapter of this paper. The patterns of separation between Persians and Magi established within the ethnographic description of the burial practices of each will inform our reading of that account. The historian establishes the disparity between the Magi and the Persians early in the *Histories* so that his audience can recognize that, although the former often serve important functions within the court of the latter, the two groups are distinct in terms of their *nomoi* and thus are discrete ethnic groups that will behave differently throughout the course of the narrative.

Herodotus positions his ethnography of the Persians in his account of a watershed moment in the first book of the *Histories*, as Cyrus conquers the Lydian empire, bringing the Persians into contact with the Asiatic Greeks of Ionia. Furthermore, the historian frames his discussion of the Persian *nomoi* with a description of the ascension of Cyrus to the kingship and the fall of Croesus' rule at the Great King's hands. Herodotus thus contrasts the rise of the founder of the Achaemenid dynasty with the fall of Croesus and an independent Lydian kingdom. The historian's placement of this ethnography in his

account of the changing fortunes of these eastern potentates therefore links the Persians' customs to their success, a theme that pervades the *Histories*.

The various elements of the Persian *nomoi* that Herodotus presents demonstrate that the historian stresses the dissimilarities between Persian and Greek customs, thus allowing his primarily Hellenic audience to understand these foreigners through a lens shaded to suit their own cultural understanding. Herodotus then utilizes his audience's understanding of these contrasts between Persian and Hellenic customs in his narrative. Throughout the *Histories*, he recalls the practices with which he distinguished between the Persians and the Greeks in the former's ethnography in order to corroborate his description of these divergences, a practice that demonstrates how he foregrounds within the Persian *nomoi* events that he will later describe in his narrative. Furthermore, the patterns of omission and disparity that Herodotus uses to define the Persian customs help clarify his identification of the Magi as distinct from their Persian rulers. This divergence will inform our understanding of the historian's presentation of the revolt of the Persian nobles against the usurper Magi, whose customs Herodotus contrasts with the Persians' at this earlier point in his narrative. The awareness and comprehension of the Persian customs therefore enhances one's appreciation for and insight into the complicated and intricately crafted text of the *Histories*.

The following chapter will focus provide a focused analysis on the educational trivium of the Persians. We will see how Herodotus continues the pattern of stressing the disparity between Greek and Persian customs as he weaves the three elements of the Persian educational practices into his narrative. The historian recalls the themes of truth

telling, archery, and horsemanship throughout the *Histories* to corroborate his claim of the link between *nomos* and action and to demonstrate how adherence to one's customs leads to success.

II: Educating the Persians: The Trivium in the *Histories*

Herodotus describes the Persian educational system as a threefold system of training their youths in horsemanship, archery, and telling the truth (ἱππεύειν καὶ τοξεύειν καὶ ἀληθίζεσθαι; 1.136.2) from ages five to twenty. This chapter will examine each of these three elements in turn and investigate how the historian draws upon these components throughout the *Histories*. This analysis will follow the order of Herodotus' incorporation of the trivium into his extended narrative of the revolt against the Magi and the ascension of Darius to the throne. First, we will examine how the theme of truth-telling allows the historian to contrast Greeks and Persians further. Secondly, the analysis will turn to the theme of archery, a part of the trivium that Herodotus describes as a skill used by the Persians to attest to their own competence. Both Cambyses and Darius use the bow in their courts; the former to prove his sanity, the latter to validate a request that he makes of Zeus. Herodotus' account of the Battle of Thermopylae contrasts the Persians' skill at archery with Greek hoplite combat. Finally, we will trace the topic of Persian horsemanship throughout the histories and examine how Herodotus evokes this theme at moments which tie the fortunes of the Persians to their success or misfortune as cavalrymen. The conflict between Croesus and Cyrus for control of Lydia provides the historian with an account that demonstrates that other nations cannot use the quintessential Persian skill of horsemanship against them. Herodotus also reports on two notable commanders, whose accomplishments are the direct result of their aptitude as cavalrymen and whose subsequent demises stem from the misfortunes that they suffer while riding their horses. Just as the Persian ethnography as a whole, as analyzed in the

previous chapter, allows Herodotus to contrast the Persians with the Greeks, we will see here how his use of the individual facets of the trivium reveals further dissimilarities between these two peoples. Furthermore, the Persians' dedication to their educational *nomoi* becomes clear through their actions and successes, as the final chapter, which will analyze the revolt against the Magi and Darius' ascension to the throne, will further demonstrate. Throughout the *Histories*, Herodotus returns to the three elements of the Persian *paideia* at pivotal moments in his narrative and uses these themes to contrast the Persians with the Greeks and to corroborate his account of their successes and failures.

In his larger account of the Persians' customs, Herodotus uses the verb παιδεύουσι (1.136.2) to describe their practice of training their youths at horsemanship, archery, and telling the truth. This word choice suggests that the historian desires to correlate this custom with the Greeks' formal system of education, *paideia*, a term which is derived from the verb that Herodotus uses. This educational trivium is one of only two customs that the historian explicitly praises in his account of the Persian *nomoi* (1.137.1).[74] There are no extant Persian sources that describe the method or form of education during the Achaemenid period, a fact that dictates that scholars rely upon Herodotus' account of the *paideia*, with no corroboration for the historian's claim that he acquired this information from personal experience and Persian informers (1.131; 1.140).[75] Asheri, in looking for a Persian source for Herodotus' description of the trivium, claims that formulae of self-glorification among eastern monarchs who

[74] The other is that Persians do not punish or kill each other or their slaves for any single offense, but rather weigh all of their wrongs against all of their good services before dispensing judgment (1.137).
[75] For the lack of Persian sources and the necessity of relying on Greek sources, v. Briant (1996), pp. 339-40. For the discussion of Herodotus' sources for the ethnography, v. pp. 6-10, above.

commonly depict themselves as skilled archers and horsemen are the foundation of the historian's depiction.[76] Root, in her exhaustive analysis of the official artistic programme of the Achaemenid kings, notes that the horse and rider motif is nonexistent in official court sculpture, though it is common in satrapal coin issues and aristocratic luxury goods such as signature seals.[77] Herodotus is likely to have been familiar with these more portable media, thus Asheri's claim may have some merit.

Regardless of the actual source of the historian's knowledge of the trivium, the emergence of a larger Greek tradition of discussing the Persian educational system in the generation after Herodotus reflects that his account fueled the Hellenic idealization of this practice. In two separate works (*Anab* 1.9.2-6; *Cyr.* 1.2.3-12), Xenophon praises Persian educational customs, describing a system similar to that which Herodotus describes, but adds that the youths are trained in justice (δικαιοσύνην) and throwing the javelin (ἀκοντίζειν). In these accounts, Xenophon stresses the moral component of these practices and employs them as part of his own didactic program. Ps.-Plato (*Alc*. 121e-122a) further idealizes the Persian educational system by altering Herodotus' and Xenophon's depiction to resemble more closely that of the Academy, as he claims that the Persians entrust the youths to four royal tutors (βασιλείους παιδαγωγοὺς) who are the wisest (σοφώτατος), the most just (δικαιότατος), the most temperate (σωφρονέστατος), and the bravest (ἀνδρειότατος).[78] Strabo (15.3.18) returns to the Herodotean model of the Persian educational trivium, while adding more detail about the organization of the

[76] Asheri (1988), p. 345.
[77] Root (1979), pp. 129-130; v. Farkas (1969) for complete analysis of the horse and rider motif in non-sculptural art.
[78] On the correlation between the Ps.-Platonic depiction of Persian customs and the Academy, v. de Jong (1997), pp. 447-448.

groups of young men. Briant notes these trends in the accounts of Persian *paideia* in these authors and stresses that the Greeks are familiar only with forms of education among the Persian elite.[79] Regardless of the source behind the historian's portrayal of the Persian didactic *nomoi* or their prevalence among the various levels of Persian society, the three elements of this trivium play a significant role in his analysis of the Persians' actions in the *Histories*. Herodotus recalls the Persians' emphasis on horsemanship, archery, and telling the truth at decisive moments in his narrative and demonstrates that their successes and failures correlate directly to their ability to demonstrate competence in the elements of their educational customs.

Herodotus describes the Persian training in truth telling using the verb ἀληθίζεσθαι, a term that specifically denotes speaking the truth.[80] In a subsequent section of the Persian ethnography, the historian expounds upon this tradition of truth telling. Here Herodotus makes clear why the Persians spend fifteen years teaching their children to tell the truth:

> Αἴσχιστον δὲ αὐτοῖσι τὸ ψεύδεσθαι νενόμισται, δεύτερα δὲ τὸ ὀφείλειν χρέος, πολλῶν μὲν καὶ ἄλλων εἵνεκα, μάλιστα δὲ ἀναγκαίην φασὶ εἶναι τὸν ὀφείλοντα· καί τι ψεῦδος λέγειν (1.138.1)
>
> Lying is considered the most shameful thing to them, but the second is owing a debt. They say this for many reasons, but most of all because necessity compels the indebted man to speak some lie.

Herodotus uses an empiric perfect to describe the Persians' attitude toward lying, thus stressing the general recognition of this fact while at the same time portraying that he has

[79] For a complete discussion of Persian elite educational customs and their function in establishing and maintaining the royal ideology, v. Briant (1996), pp. 339-42 and 949-50.
[80] v. LSJ, pp. 63-64.

gained firsthand knowledge about this custom.[81] Although the action that the Persians consider second worst is incurring debt, this is largely due, as the historian records, to the association between owing money and telling lies. Thus Herodotus heightens the importance of his description of truth telling in the Persian ethnography through this twofold emphasis on their attitude toward the reprehensible nature of lying.

The Persians, quite simply, speak the truth in the *Histories*. The only notable Persian who lies in Herodotus' narrative is Artabazos, who conceals the truth about the Greek victory at Plataea as he passes through Thessaly (9.89). In his account of this lie, however, Herodotus notes the general's reluctance to misinform the Thessalians and portrays the lie as one of omission more than one of commission. By indicating Artabazos' unwillingness to lie in this way, the historian calls to his audience's mind the fact that the Persians thoroughly train their children to tell the truth. Herodotus' depiction of this educational custom aimed at veracity likely reflects his understanding of the ethical codes of honesty and justice promulgated as an integral part of the religious ideology espoused in Zoroastrianism.[82] The episode of the revolt of the seven Persian nobles against the usurper Magi is the *Histories'* most illustrative example of Persian reluctance to lie. The subsequent chapter will examine this account in detail and analyze its place as part of an extended narrative that combines the three elements of the trivium into a coherent account. Though there are few other explicit references to the Persians' obligation or compulsion to tell the truth at all times, their attitude toward lying reveals a

[81] Smyth §1948: the empiric perfect "sets forth a general truth expressly based on a fact of experience."
[82] Though it is unclear if these Zoroastrian traditions stretch as far back as the Achaemenid period, de Jong (1997), pp. 446-51, makes the case for the extrapolation of this tradition back into the Classical age.

sharp contrast between their customs and their perception of the Greeks' behavior. As we will see, battlefield stratagems and court subterfuge, however, fall into a separate category of deception from outright verbal mendacity.[83] This disconnect between speech and action within Herodotus' analysis of the Persians' exploits will become evident in the subsequent chapter.

The first element of the Persian educational trivium to which Herodotus alludes following his report of the Persian ethnography is the theme of truth telling. Immediately after he describes the Persians' customs, Herodotus returns to his account of the ascension of Cyrus the Great and his victory over Croesus, the very deeds which had initially prompted the historian to describe the Persian *nomoi*. The aftermath of Cyrus' victory over the Lydians prompts the Ionians to fortify their cities against the growing Persian threat and to appeal for help from the Greeks of Hellas (1.141). Though the Spartans rebuff the Ionians' request (1.152), the affairs in Asia pique their curiosity enough to provoke them to send envoys to Cyrus. After the Spartan herald delivers his message, warning the Great King not to attack any city in Hellas, Cyrus asks the Greeks in his court about the Lacedaemonians and then offers the following response:

> Οὐκ ἔδεισά κω ἄνδρας τοιούτους, τοῖσί ἐστι χῶρος ἐν μέσῃ τῇ πόλι ἀποδεδεγμένος ἐς τὸν συλλεγόμενοι ἀλλήλους ὀμνύντες ἐξαπατῶσι (1.153.1)
>
> I have not yet feared such men, who have a space reserved in the middle of their city, gather to it, swear oaths, and deceive one another.

[83] cf., e.g., Cyrus' stratagem to use camels against the Lydians (1.80), Darius' employment of donkeys against the Scythians (4.129), the groom's ruse to secure the throne for Darius (3.85-87); each will be analyzed below.

The verb used to denote their acts of deception, ἐξαπατῶσι, is a compounded form of ἀπατάω, which explicitly denotes deceiving someone through the use of mendacity.[84] Thus Herodotus uses the Great King's criticism to contrast directly Cyrus' view of the "lying Spartans" with the historian's earlier depiction of the "veracious Persians" recorded in the latter's ethnography. Regardless of the veracity of this statement concerning the Lacedaemonians, the verb which the historian uses above to describe the Spartans' declaration, προαγορεύουσι (1.153.1), alludes to the fact that Cyrus' reproach takes aim at the larger Greek civic institution of the agora. Furthermore, after the conclusion of the Great King's rebuke, Herodotus clarifies that the target of this rebuke is the Hellenic agora en bloc: ταῦτα ἐς τοὺς πάντας Ἕλληνας ἀπέρριψε ὁ Κῦρος τὰ ἔπεα, ὅτι ἀγορὰς στησάμενοι ὠνῇ τε καὶ πρήσι χρέωνται, "for Cyrus cast these words at all the Greeks, because they establish agoras and have the custom of buying and selling there" (1.153.2). The participle, ὀμνύντες, that Herodotus uses to describe the Greek practice of swearing oaths in the agora bears politico-legal connotations and therefore evokes the democratic function of the Hellenic agora. Thus, the historian depicts the Great King as opposed to the center of Greek political, mercantile, and social life.[85] Cyrus' rebuke therefore contrasts the Hellenic deceit and its democratic associations with the Persian proclivity for veracity. Thus, much as the other elements of the Persian ethnography discussed in the previous chapter, Herodotus' use of the themes of Persians who are notable for telling the truth and the Greeks who are deceitful, at least in the public sphere,

[84] v. LSJ, p. 181.
[85] Asheri (1988), p. 354, describes this passage as "il contrasto è qui tra il primitivismo dei Persiani (cf. 71.2) e la civiltà greca e ionica."

allows him to define Persian behavior by contrasting it with the converse practice among the Greeks.

The second element of the Persian educational trivium, archery (τοξεύειν), becomes a recurring theme that Herodotus evokes at pivotal moments in his narrative to corroborate his claims about the Persians' actions and to distinguish between Greek and Persian practices. The historian describes Persian proclivity for archery in the distinct settings of both the court and the battlefield. First, this section will analyze how the use of a bow becomes a source of both exculpation and condemnation in Cambyses' skilled hands. Secondly, Darius uses an arrow shot into the air to seal a request made of the gods in a prayer that sets into motion the remainder of the narrative of the *Histories*. Finally, we will examine how the discussion of archery in Herodotus' account of the Battle of Thermopylae reveals further contrasts between the Greek and the Persian combat techniques and foregrounds the latter's victory in the pass.

Cyrus' son, Cambyses, provides the historian with an example of a notorious king whose shocking actions combine several elements of the *nomoi* discussed in the Persian ethnography, including archery and truth telling. In the third book of the *Histories*, Herodotus treats the subject of Cambyses' madness at considerable length. He first describes how the Great King becomes enraged at the Egyptians' worship of the calf-god Apis and mortally wounds the calf in response, a sacrilege which the Egyptians claim caused Cambyses to lose his mind (3.27-30). Briant analyzes inscriptional evidence from

Egypt and concludes that the story of Cambyses' killing of the Apis is a fabrication.[86] The likely falsification of this tale heightens the historian's agency in including this account and crafting it in such a way that is replete with themes drawn from the Persian ethnography. The historian then describes various other acts of madness on the Great King's part, in an attempt to show instead that the "sacred disease" caused this insanity.[87] The examples that Herodotus uses to demonstrate Cambyses' madness evoke various Persian customs that he described in the ethnography.[88]

This allusion to Persian customs sheds further light on the lengthiest account that Herodotus utilizes in his discussion of Cambyses' madness. The historian first describes how Cambyses asks Prexaspes, a trusted noble, for the Persians' opinion about their king. The latter's response angers the Great King: Ὦ δέσποτα, τὰ μὲν ἄλλα πάντα μεγάλως ἐπαινέαι, τῇ δὲ φιλοινίῃ σέ φασι πλεόνως προσκεῖσθαι, "Master, you are praised greatly in respect to all other matters but they say that you are greatly inclined to the love of wine" (3.34.2). Prexaspes tempers his criticism by first mentioning that the king is praised in other respects, before describing Cambyses' excessive drunkenness. Herodotus describes the Persians' affinity for wine in his account of their *nomoi*: οἴνῳ δὲ κάρτα προσκέαται, "they are excessively inclined to wine" (1.133.3). The historian uses the

[86] Briant (1996), pp. 66-68, demonstrates that Cambyses' actions reflect an attempt to improve his standing with the Egyptians.

[87] Herodotus uses the phrase: τὴν ἱρὴν [νοῦσον] ὀνομάζουσί τινες, "some call the disease sacred" (3.33). The historian's description of this illness in this fashion is a clear allusion to the Hippocratic treatise *On the Sacred Disease*. Thomas (2000), pp. 34-35, analyzes the connections between this passage and the medical text. She notes that Herodotus' explanation of the disease as hereditary (ἐκ γενετῆς), in particular, demonstrates the historian's awareness of the Hippocratic text; cf. Hipp. *Morb. sacr.* § 5.7-8 (Jones), ἄρχεται δὲ ὥσπερ καὶ τἆλλα νουσήματα κατὰ γένος.

[88] Herodotus describes how Cambyses was driven mad against his closest relatives (3.33.1). He notes Cambyses' role in the murder of his brother Smerdis (3.30) as well as his sister and wife (3.31), but does not ascribe to the Great King any acts of parricide, an omission that recalls the Persian ethnography, where Herodotus notes that Persians do not kill their parents (1.137).

same verb, πρόσκειμαι, to describe both Cambyses' and his subjects' attitudes toward drink. Herodotus thus opens his account of the exchange between Prexaspes and the Great King with a direct reference to his account of the Persian *nomoi*. The rest of this description of Cambyses' drunkenness, however, sets the king apart from the rest of the Persians. Herodotus portrays Cambyses' fondness as a 'love' for wine (φιλοινίῃ), instead of a mere inclination. The comparative adverb πλεόνως further separates the king from the rest of the Persians. Thus, Herodotus crafts Prexaspes' criticism of Cambyses in such a way that both recalls the ethnography of the Persians and demonstrates that the fault of the king's love of wine is that it is excessive. Between Cambyses' refraining from parricide amidst his other deplorable murders and his love of wine, Herodotus frames his description of Cambyses' madness with references to his description of Persian *nomoi* and thus foregrounds this account with his interest in the king's adherence to his peoples' customs. Cambyses' reaction to Prexaspes' reproach will incorporate two elements from the pedagogical trivium: truth telling and archery.

The Great King takes exception to Prexaspes' denigration, claiming that the Persians are wrong in expressing their opinion of his drunkenness. Cambyses communicates his anger at this disparagement in terms that recall Herodotus' ethnography of the Persians: σύ νυν μάθε [αὐτὸς] εἰ λέγουσι Πέρσαι ἀληθέα εἴτε αὐτοὶ λέγοντες ταῦτα παραφρονέουσι, "Find out for yourself if the Persians speak the truth or if they themselves are mad in saying these things" (3.35.1). Cambyses thus claims that either his subjects are lying, contrary to their educational custom focused on truth telling, or the king has driven himself mad through his love of wine, a state markedly in excess of

the normal Persian fondness for the drink. The Great King claims that either he himself or his subjects, but not both, are in a state that is in contradiction of their customary *nomoi*. In an attempt to prove that he is not excessively prone to drunkenness, Cambyses uses a second element of the Persian educational trivium: shooting a bow. He threatens Prexaspes' son, as follows:

> εἰ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ παιδὸς τοῦ σοῦ τοῦδε ἑστεῶτος ἐν τοῖσι προθύροισι βαλὼν τύχοιμι μέσης τῆς καρδίης, Πέρσαι φανέονται λέγοντες οὐδέν· ἢν δὲ ἁμάρτω, φάναι Πέρσας τε λέγειν ἀληθέα καὶ ἐμὲ μὴ σωφρονέειν (3.35.2)
>
> For if I happen to hit your son, standing there in the portico, in the middle of his heart, the Persians will seem to be saying nothing, but if I miss the mark, it would show that the Persians speak the truth and that I am not in my right mind.

Cambyses thus constitutes his defense of his character as a test of his adherence to the Persians' educational *nomoi*: if he can prove his aptitude at archery, he calls into question the nobles' capacity for telling the truth. Cambyses proves successful in this attempt as his shot is found to have passed through the heart of the slain son of Prexaspes, thus proving, at least in his own mind, his sanity and his skill at a quintessential Persian *nomos* (3.35). The historian also, however, confirms the veracity of the Persians' claim that the Great King is insane with the collection of the examples of Cambyses' madness that he presents.[89] Thus, Herodotus does describe the Great King's adherence to the custom of learning to shoot a bow effectively, but he also demonstrates how the nobles who claim that Cambyses is mad are also telling the truth and thus following an element of the Persian trivium for their own part.

[89] Herodotus presents these examples in both the preceding and subsequent chapters (3.27-38), leaving little doubt in the reader's mind as to his stance on Cambyses' madness.

Lest any of his audience remain confused as to his stance on Cambyses' madness, Herodotus closes this account with an explicit statement as to the Great King's mental state: πανταχῇ ὦν μοι δῆλά ἐστι ὅτι ἐμάνη μεγάλως ὁ Καμβύσης, "all things considered, therefore, it is clear to me that Cambyses was thoroughly mad" (3.38.1). The final piece of evidence that the historian presents to corroborate this claim is that the king committed sacrilegious acts against various cult statues of Hephaestus. Herodotus subsequently maintains that had Cambyses not been mad: οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἱροῖσί τε καὶ νομαίοισι ἐπεχείρησε καταγελᾶν, "he would not have attempted to mock holy and customary things" (3.38.1). The historian concludes his narrative of the madness of the Great King with an explicit reference to the concept of customs (νομαίοισι).[90] Herodotus thus evokes the *nomoi* of the Persians throughout his depiction of Cambyses' madness. Though the historian claims that the Great King mocks the customs of others, he depicts Cambyses as living in accordance with the earlier account of Persian *nomoi*. Herodotus notes how the Great King demonstrates his aptitude at archery in a way that contrasts this adherence to custom with the nobles' observance of their pedagogical *nomos* of learning to tell the truth. Herodotus' description of these elements of the Persian educational trivium in his earlier ethnography therefore foregrounds these themes within his account of Cambyses' madness and substantiates his claim that their behaviors reflect their adherence to these customs.

Darius, the first of the Achaemenid kings to rule following the death of Cambyses and the brief interlude during the reign of the imposter Magus, likewise uses his aptitude

[90] This observation further prompts Herodotus to compare the customs of the Indians and Greeks and to claim, with a citation of Pindar, that "custom is king of all," v. pp. 12-13, above.

at archery within the court.[91] A crisis arose during his reign when the Ionian Greeks of Asia Minor, with assistance from Athens and Eretria, rose up against their Persian satraps. As news of Athenian involvement in the Ionian revolt reached the Great King, he first inquires about these mainland Greeks and then:

> αἰτῆσαι τὸ τόξον, λαβόντα δὲ καὶ ἐπιθέντα ὀϊστὸν ἄνω πρὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀπεῖναι, καί μιν ἐς τὸν ἠέρα βάλλοντα εἰπεῖν· «Ὦ Ζεῦ, ἐκγενέσθαι μοι Ἀθηναίους τείσασθαι» (5.105.1-2)
>
> He asked for his bow and, after taking it up and placing an arrow upon it, he shot the arrow up toward the heavens and, having cast the arrow into the air, he said: "O Zeus, allow me to take vengeance on the Athenians."

The request that Darius makes of Zeus to take vengeance on the Athenians for their participation in the Ionian Revolt effectively drives Herodotus' narration of the subsequent Persian invasions of Greece.[92] Herodotus relates two invasion attempts during Darius' reign: the fleet under Mardonius' command that a storm wrecks off the coast of Athos (6.43-45) and the famed Marathon campaign (6.94-117). The Great King's debate with the Persian nobles over his grand campaign against Hellas is likewise replete with allusions to Darius' request to take vengeance against Athens, as both Mardonius (7.5) and Xerxes himself (7.8.β) recall the former king's prayer. Thus, this entreaty has a direct bearing on the remainder of Herodotus' *Histories* and its form relates back to the Persian educational customs. Darius uses a bow and the action of shooting an arrow into the air to formalize his appeal to Zeus. In his study of the Classical traditions of the Magi and Zoroastrian religion, A. de Jong notes that there is no corroboration for the ritual of

[91] The complete account of the rule of the Magi and the revolt of the Persian nobles against them will be analyzed in the following chapter.
[92] On Herodotus' identification of Zeus as the *interpretation graeca* of Ahura Mazda, v. de Jong (1997), pp. 96-97.

shooting an arrow into the sun as described by Herodotus.[93] What is clear, however, is that Persian kings did formalize their prayers by turning toward and addressing the sun.[94] The historian takes the time to describe each step of the Great King's process of lifting, loading, and firing the bow. Herodotus augments the known Persian tradition of praying to the sun with his own detailed portrayal of Darius shooting an arrow into the sky. Moreover, Herodotus' depiction of Darius' action reaches a level of pleonasm as the historian devotes more words to the shooting of the arrow than to the Great King's entreaty itself. Thus, Herodotus' language emphasizes Darius' use of the bow in this physical enactment of his prayer and therefore recalls this element of the Persian educational *nomoi* at this watershed moment of the *Histories*.

Few stories from the Greco-Persian wars are better known than Herodotus' account of the Battle of Thermopylae. After the historian narrates the now famous last stand of the Lacedaemonians and Thespians, he records an anecdote concerning Dienekes, a Spartan whom he claims proved himself the most valiant combatant in the final defense of the pass. Herodotus first relates the concern that an unnamed Trachinian expresses over the vast number of the Persian force: ἐπεὰν οἱ βάρβαροι ἀπίωσι τὰ τοξεύματα, τὸν ἥλιον ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθεος τῶν ὀϊστῶν ἀποκρύπτουσι, "Whenever the barbarians shoot their arrows, they blot out the sun with the multitude of their shafts" (7.226.1). Through the apprehension of this anonymous Trachinian, Herodotus thus uses the Persians' proclivity for archery to demonstrate the abundance of their troops, the

[93] de Jong (1997), p. 227.
[94] de Jong (1997), pp. 365-67.

reliance upon which Herodotus notes in his account of their ethnography (1.136.1).[95] Dienekes replies to this concern with a typically laconic quip: εἰ ἀποκρυπτόντων τῶν Μήδων τὸν ἥλιον ὑπὸ σκιῇ ἔσοιτο πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἡ μάχη καὶ οὐκ ἐν ἡλίῳ, "If the Medes block out the sun, then the fight against them would be under the shade and not in the sun" (7.226.2). Furthermore, Dienekes' retort recalls the recently narrated skirmish between the Phocians guarding the Anopaia path and the encircling Persian force. Hydarnes prepares his soldiers to engage the Greeks, and the Persians let loose a volley of arrows:

> Οἱ δὲ Φωκέες ὡς ἐβάλλοντο τοῖσι τοξεύμασι πολλοῖσι τε καὶ πυκνοῖσι, οἴχοντο φεύγοντες ἐπὶ τοῦ ὄρεος τὸν κόρυμβον. (7.218.3)
>
> When the Phocians were struck by the arrows, which were numerous and densely packed, they departed, fleeing to the summit of the mountain.

The barrage that Herodotus here describes consists of many (πολλοῖσι) arrows that are crowded in a thick mass (πυκνοῖσι). Thus, the Persian volley proves capable of providing shade as Dienekes had speculated. More significantly, however, the Persians use this barrage of arrows to force the Phocians to retreat, an act that allows Hydarnes' encircling force to progress by way of the Anopaia path and successfully surround the Greeks in the pass at Thermopylae. Thus, the emphasis that Herodotus places upon the Persians' aptitude at archery in his account of the Battle of Thermopylae makes clear that this skill paves the way for Persian success in this encounter.

Throughout the narrative of the *Histories*, Herodotus evokes the theme of shooting a bow at pivotal moments both to foreground the Persians' behavior and to

[95] v. pp. 34-36 and esp. n. 66, p. 35, above, for a discussion of the Persian reliance on the number of their troops.

corroborate his claims as to their actions. The historian uses other elements of the Persian ethnography to frame his depiction of Cambyses' madness, while incorporating both archery and truth telling into his most detailed example of the Great King's insanity. These two elements of the Persians' educational *nomoi* allow Herodotus to contrast the king's adherence to his customs with that of his subjects. In a ritual very likely fabricated by the historian, Darius shoots an arrow into the air in order to formalize a request that he makes of the gods. The physical enactment of this prayer, emphasizing the theme of archery, predicts and drives Herodotus' later narrative history. Finally, the historian's description of the anonymous Trachinian's fear of the multitude of Persian arrows at Thermopylae and the progression of Hydarnes' flanking force through the Anopaia path contrasts the fighting techniques of the Persians with those of the Greeks and demonstrates that the Persians achieve victory through the observance of their educational *nomoi*. The Persians' actions and fortunes in the *Histories* are therefore predicated upon their adherence to the custom of learning to shoot a bow as youths.

The third facet of Herodotus' account of Persian educational customs consists of training the youths to ride horses (ἱππεύειν; 1.136). Like the two other elements of the trivium, Persian horsemanship also plays an integral role in the *Histories*. Herodotus relies on his description of their aptitude at riding horses to foreground his presentation of the Persians' rise to prominence and fall from power. First, this section will examine how the failure of an enemy to recognize the Persians' understanding of equine behavior leads to their defeat at the hands of Cyrus' army. Secondly, the historian makes clear through his depiction of two notable commanders that a Persian's authority and power is directly

linked to the skill that he demonstrates and the good fortune that he enjoys while riding his horse. Thus, Herodotus draws a correlation in the *Histories* between the Persians' triumphs and their aptitude for horsemanship, between their defeats and the misfortunes that they suffer while riding their mounts.

The conflict between Cyrus and Croesus over the control of Asia Minor provides the opportunity for Herodotus to lay the backdrop for his presentation of the Persian *nomoi* shortly thereafter in the first book of the *Histories*. The turning point of this struggle, as the historian presents it, is the failure of Croesus to understand the importance of horsemanship to the Persians. Herodotus foregrounds this element of Persian educational system within his narrative of the war between these two kings. The result of the Lydians' and Persians' first battle at Pteria is a stalemate, prompting Croesus to withdraw to Sardis (1.76-77). While at his capital, the Lydian king sees what he believes to be an ominous portent:

> τὸ προάστειον πᾶν ὀφίων ἐνεπλήσθη. Φανέντων δὲ αὐτῶν οἱ ἵπποι, μετιέντες τὰς νομὰς νέμεσθαι, φοιτῶντες κατήσθιον (1.78.1)
>
> The entire space before the city was made full of snakes. After these serpents appeared, the horses ceased grazing in their pastures, but roaming about they instead ate the snakes.

Though Croesus did not receive the interpretation of this omen before his capture, Herodotus records the meaning that the Telmessians deduced, lest his audience fail to see the significance of this strange sign:

> Τελμησσέες μέντοι τάδε ἔγνωσαν, στρατὸν ἀλλόθροον προσδόκιμον εἶναι Κροίσῳ ἐπὶ τὴν χώρην, ἀπικόμενον δὲ τοῦτον καταστρέψεσθαι τοὺς ἐπιχωρίους, λέγοντες ὅφιν εἶναι γῆς παῖδα, ἵππον δὲ πολέμιόν τε καὶ ἐπήλυδα (1.78.2)

> Indeed, the Telmessians perceived the following: that a foreign army is expected to come to Croesus against his country, and having come there this army will subdue the natives, and the Telmessians explain that the snake is the child of the land, while the horse is the enemy and foreigner.

The seers' interpretation equates the snakes with the autochthonous Lydians, a common symbolism in the geoethnographic accounts of the Greeks.[96] The horses, therefore, represent the Persians, who will conquer their enemies just as the equines consumed the serpents. Herodotus, by recording this portent and its explanation that the horses symbolize the Persians, foregrounds his later account of their educational *nomoi*. In this premonition, the very subject of one element of their trivium, horses, represents the Persians.

Croesus, however, fails to perceive this interpretation of the portent and instead confronts the Persians on the plain before the city, the same location where the king first saw the omen. Herodotus presents this conflict as a meeting of two notable armies, both demonstrating remarkable skill on horseback. He describes the Lydians' aptitude for horsemanship as follows:

> Ἦν δὲ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον ἔθνος οὐδὲν ἐν τῇ Ἀσίῃ οὔτε ἀνδρηιότερον οὔτε ἀλκιμώτερον τοῦ Λυδίου. Ἡ δὲ μάχη σφέων ἦν ἀπ' ἵππων, δόρατά τε ἐφόρεον μεγάλα καὶ αὐτοὶ ἦσαν ἱππεύεσθαι ἀγαθοί (1.79.3)
>
> At that time, there was no nation in Asia more courageous or stronger than the Lydian race. Their way of battle was from horseback, and they bore long spears and they themselves were good at riding horses.

In this statement on Lydian superiority, the historian remarks that they are proficient (ἀγαθοί) at an action, riding a horse (ἱππεύεσθαι), which he will later denote as an

[96] For general discussion of the snake as a symbol in Greek religion and mythology, v. Küsten (1913) and Bodson (1978), pp. 68-92, and Malkin, "Snakes" *OCD*[3], pp. 1417-1418.

element of the Persian educational trivium. Perhaps the Lydians' own aptitude for horsemanship causes Croesus to fail to recognize the meaning of the portent discussed above. Though Herodotus makes no explicit statement in this passage about the relative prominence of Persian cavalrymen, the stalemate to which the two armies fought at Pteria (1.76) suggests that the Persians are not inadequate horsemen themselves. Furthermore, Herodotus had just previously tempered this report with the portent that he had recorded which predicted that the Persians would defeat the Lydians in this conflict. Thus, the stratagem behind Cyrus' victory tips the scales in the struggle that had otherwise reached a standoff between these two powerful kings. Herodotus first sets the scene and then comments on Cyrus' reaction to the Lydian forces:

> ἐνθαῦτα ὁ Κῦρος ὡς εἶδε τοὺς Λυδοὺς ἐς μάχην τασσομένους, καταρρωδήσας τὴν ἵππον ἐποίησε Ἁρπάγου ὑποθεμένου ἀνδρὸς Μήδου τοιόνδε· ὅσαι τῷ στρατῷ τῷ ἑωυτοῦ εἵποντο σιτοφόροι τε καὶ σκευοφόροι κάμηλοι, ταύτας πάσας ἁλίσας καὶ ἀπελὼν τὰ ἄχθεα ἄνδρας ἐπ' αὐτὰς ἀνέβησε ἱππάδα στολὴν ἐνεσταλμένους, σκευάσας δὲ αὐτοὺς προσέταξε τῆς ἄλλης στρατιῆς προϊέναι πρὸς τὴν Κροίσου ἵππον (1.80.2)
>
> Then, when Cyrus saw the Lydians drawing themselves up for battle, and feared their cavalry, he did the following at the suggestion of a Median, Harpagos: however many baggage and pack camels were following his army, he gathered them together, removed their loads, and mounted on them men, dressed in the equipment of a cavalryman. Having prepared them, he ordered them to advance before his army against the cavalry of Croesus.

Herodotus stresses the distinction between the Lydian cavalry and these Persian pseudo-horsemen. The historian both begins and ends this description with a mention of the former's horse, while he makes clear that the latter's camel riders are not true cavalrymen, but rather some men merely dressed and armed like them. Herodotus next explains that Cyrus places his actual cavalry in the rear of his battle lines in order to

reiterate the distinctions between the front lines of the Lydian and Persian forces. The historian then provides the rationale behind the Great King's stratagem:

> τὰς δὲ καμήλους ἔταξε ἀντία τῆς ἵππου τῶνδε εἵνεκεν· κάμηλον ἵππος φοβέεται καὶ οὐκ ἀνέχεται οὔτε τὴν ἰδέην αὐτῆς ὁρέων οὔτε τὴν ὀδμὴν ὀσφραινόμενος. Αὐτοῦ δὴ ὧν τούτου εἵνεκεν ἐσεσόφιστο, ἵνα τῷ Κροίσῳ ἄχρηστον ᾖ τὸ ἱππικόν (1.80.4)
>
> [Cyrus] arranged his camels opposite the cavalry for the following reasons: the horse fears the camel and they can suffer neither the sight nor the smell of one. For this very reason, then, he devised this so that the cavalry would be useless to Croesus.

The historian makes clear that the horses become useless (ἄχρηστον) to Croesus due to the Great King's scheme.[97] By placing his camels opposite the Lydian horse, Cyrus effectively negates his opponents' cavalry. This scheme plays out as the Great King expects. Croesus' horses fled and the Persians were able to besiege and subsequently capture Sardis. Given Herodotus' inclusion of horsemanship within the Persians' educational trivium, the meaning behind Cyrus' use of the camels to defeat the Lydian cavalry extends beyond mere stratagem. In this account, the Persians demonstrate a superior knowledge of equine behavior. As we will see in the subsequent chapter, Darius and his groom will likewise exhibit an understanding of horses' behavior in their ploy to ensure that Darius becomes king.[98] Croesus does not recognize the danger of advancing his cavalry opposite the Persian camels and pays for that mistake with the loss of his kingdom. Herodotus' depiction of Cyrus' battlefield stratagem thus demonstrates that the

[97] A similar ploy works during Darius' campaign against the Scythians, whose horses become agitated and useless when they approach the donkeys and mules of the Persian baggage train (4.129).
[98] v. pp. 81-85, below.

Persians' enemies will find defeat if they fail to comprehend the level of skill and knowledge that the Persians possess in the elements of their educational *nomoi*.

Throughout the *Histories*, Herodotus draws a parallel between an individual Persian's success and his aptitude at horsemanship. Artybios and Pharnuches, two distinguished Persian commanders, find their fortunes rise and fall in accordance with their successes and failures on horseback. In the midst of the Ionian Revolt, Onesilos leads the Cyprians in a concurrent rebellion against Persia. Darius sends a fleet under the command of Artybios to quell the Cypriot revolt. The historian records this Persian commander's deadly style of fighting from horseback: Ἤλαυνε δὲ ἵππον ὁ Ἀρτύβιος δεδιδαγμένον πρὸς ὁπλίτην ἵστασθαι ὀρθόν, "Artybios rode a horse that had been trained to rear up directly at a hoplite" (5.111.1). Herodotus depicts Artybios' way of fighting as a conflict between hoplite and cavalryman, thus contrasting the strengths of the Greek and Persian forces. This unusual technique causes Onesilos to take counsel with his shield bearer, who devises a plan in which the two will work together to bring down Artybios and his horse (5.111.2-4). The squire's strategy highlights the cooperative nature of Greek hoplite warfare and proves successful, as Onesilos and his shield bearer do kill the Persian commander and his mount. The shield bearer maims the horse in this conflict as he: δρεπάνῳ πλήξας ἀπαράσσει τοῦ ἵππου τοὺς πόδας, "struck the horse with a scythe and cut off its legs" (5.112.2), thereby transforming the horse into a monstrous two-legged creature. The squire's action against the horse therefore highlights the impropriety of these battlefield tactics as the shield bearer hacks the animal into this unnatural state so that: μή μιν ἀνδρὸς ἔτι γε μηδενὸς στήσεσθαι ἐναντίον, "it never again

rear up opposite anyone" (5.111.4). The historian then concludes this account with an aperçu that emphasizes the importance of the horse to the Persian's status: Ἀρτύβιος μὲν δὴ ὁ στρατηγὸς τῶν Περσέων ὁμοῦ τῷ ἵππῳ πίπτει αὐτοῦ ταύτῃ, "Artybios, then, the general of the Persians, fell on that very spot together with his horse" (5.113.1). Herodotus makes explicit the direct correlation between Artybios' demise and the death of his horse. This explanation recalls the emphasis placed upon horsemanship in the educational training of the Persians. Although Artybios had trained his horse to rear up in the presence of hoplites, a terrifying technique that had previously earned him renown, he and his horse met their fate together at the hands of Onesilos and his shield bearer. Herodotus depiction of Artybios' downfall contrasts Persian cavalry warfare with Greek hoplite combat and therefore makes clear that the general does not fail because of a lack of skill at riding his horse, but rather because of the superiority of the Greeks' hoplite technique.

Xerxes had initially appointed Pharnuches to a position of command within the forces that undertook the Great Expedition against the Greeks. As the army set out from Sardis, however, this general suffered an accident, became ill, and subsequently lost his command. Herodotus depicts this calamity and its aftermath in detail:

> Ὡς γὰρ ὁρμῶντο ἐκ Σαρδίων, ἐς συμφορὴν ἐνέπεσε ἀνεθέλητον· ἐλαύνοντι γάρ οἱ ὑπὸ τοὺς πόδας τοῦ ἵππου ὑπέδραμε κύων, καὶ ὁ ἵππος οὐ προϊδὼν ἐφοβήθη τε καὶ στὰς ὀρθὸς ἀπεσείσατο τὸν Φαρνούχεα· πεσὼν δὲ αἷμά τε ἤμεε καὶ ἐς φθίσιν περιῆλθε ἡ νοῦσος (7.88.1)
>
> As they were setting out from Sardis, he fell upon a terrible misfortune: for while he was riding out, a dog ran up under the feet of his horse, the horse did not see it and was alarmed. The horse stood straight up and threw Pharnuches down. Having fallen down, he vomited blood and the disease progressed to consumption.

The historian describes this misfortune with language that echoes Artybios' technique discussed above. That general taught his horse to stand up straight (ἵστασθαι ὀρθόν), just as Pharnuches' horse stands up straight (στὰς ὀρθὸς) when it encounters the dog. The difference, therefore, is the latter's failure to control his horse when it became afraid. Though Herodotus does describe the seriousness of the injury that befell Pharnuches, he notes lastly how the commander ordered his slaves to punish his horse for this mishap:

> Τὸν δὲ ἵππον αὐτίκα κατ' ἀρχὰς ἐποίησαν οἱ οἰκέται ὡς ἐκέλευε· ἐς τὸν χῶρον ἐν τῷ περ κατέβαλε τὸν δεσπότην ἀπαγαγόντες, ἐν τοῖσι γούνασι ἀπέταμον τὰ σκέλεα. Φαρνούχης μὲν οὕτω παρελύθη τῆς ἡγεμονίης. (7.88.2)
>
> Immediately, the servants did to the horse as [Pharnuches] commanded: they brought it back to the spot on which it threw down its master, and they cut off its legs at the knees. Thus, Pharnuches was dismissed from his command.

The historian, by concluding his account of Pharnuches with mention of the punishment inflicted upon his horse, makes clear that the general lost his command not because of the injury that impeded him, but instead as a consequence of the misfortune that he suffered while failing to restrain his rearing horse. Pharnuches lost control of his horse and consequently lost his position as general. The physical dismemberment imposed upon Pharnuches' horse recalls the exploit of Onesilos' shield bearer, who similarly cut the legs off of Artybios' mount. This correspondence between these two accounts demonstrates that Herodotus explicitly ties together an individual Persian's success and prominence with his achievements as a horseman. Conversely, a Persian who suffers misfortune or defeat while on horseback, regardless of whether this is due to his own lack

of skill or because of the superiority of his enemy, will consequently fall together with his horse.

The theme of Persian horsemanship recurs throughout the *Histories*. The war between Croesus and Cyrus over control of Lydia pits against one another two peoples skilled as cavalrymen. The turning point in this conflict, however, comes when Croesus fails to recognize the Persians' superior knowledge of equine behavior and the latter rout his cavalry from the field with donkeys employed on the front lines. The two Persian generals, Artybios and Pharnuches, suffer misfortunes that cost one his life, the other his health and command. In each of these accounts, Herodotus emphasizes the correlation between the Persians' demises and their failure at riding their horses. Thus, through his depiction of the conflict between Cyrus and Croesus and the tales of Artybios and Pharnuches, the historian makes clear that the Persians' successes or failures correlate directly to their understanding of horses and achievements as cavalrymen, at both the individual and state level.

Throughout the *Histories*, Herodotus recalls the trivium of the Persians' educational customs: riding a horse, shooting a bow, and telling the truth. These three elements allow the historian to distinguish further between Greek and Persian patterns of behavior and to demonstrate the link between the Persians' customs and their actions in his narrative. Herodotus describes Cyrus' denigration of the Greek agora as a difference between the fundamental principles of Hellenic and Persian society; the latter customarily tell the truth, while the former are wont to deceive one another in a public setting. Two Great Kings, Cambyses and Darius, shoot a bow within their courts in attempts to

corroborate their speech with the action of archery. Cambyses kills Prexaspes' son with an arrow in an attempt to demonstrate his sobriety, while, to Herodotus at least, this very act proves that the Persian nobles are telling the truth about the Great King's excessive drunkenness. The historian's depiction of Cambyses' madness is replete with references to the Persians' *nomoi*, framing the extended account of the murder of Prexaspes' son with demonstrations of the Persians' adherence to their customs. Darius, conversely, shoots an arrow into the air to formalize his request of Zeus that he be permitted to take vengeance on the Athenians. This prayer then drives the historian's portrayal of the subsequent conflicts between the Greeks and Persians. The Persians prove themselves victorious at the Battle of Thermopylae after first encircling the Greeks in the pass by traversing the Anopaia path, an action made possible through their use of archery. Dienekes' laconic quip about the numerous Persian arrows that the Greeks face at Thermopylae recalls the Persian custom of relying on the strength of numbers. Thus, Herodotus invokes the theme of archery at pivotal moments in the *Histories* to demonstrate the Persians' adherence to their customs. Lastly, the historian establishes a correlation between horsemanship and the success of the Persians' endeavors. As the account of Croesus' and Cyrus' struggle for control of Lydia and the stories of Artybios and Pharnuches demonstrate, the Persians thrive when they exhibit their knowledge of horses and aptitude as cavalrymen, but meet their downfall when they suffer defeat or misfortunes on horseback. Thus, the educational customs of the Persians become an integral part of the narrative that Herodotus presents in the *Histories*, both foregrounding and corroborating the historian's analysis of events.

The following chapter will build upon this examination of the elements of the trivium by evaluating how Herodotus weaves the three elements of the Persians' educational *nomoi* together into one account. We will examine how the historian evokes the themes of truth telling, archery, and horsemanship in a pivotal moment in his narrative, that of the fall of the Magi and the ascension of Darius. This analysis will further develop the correlation between the Persians' customs and their actions in the *Histories*. We will see how Herodotus evokes similar themes surrounding the failure of the Persians' enemies to understand the latter's *nomoi* and how their adherence to their customs to leads to their success.

III: *Nomoi* Revealed: The Ascension of Darius

The previous chapter analyzed how Herodotus incorporates the theme of the Persian trivium into the larger narrative of the *Histories*. Now, we will examine how the historian incorporates all three elements of the Persian educational customs into one extended account, that of the revolt against the Magi and the ascension of Darius. In weaving the trivium into this *logos*, Herodotus develops further the relationship between the Persians' educational practices and their actions. The historian recalls the themes of truth telling, archery, and horsemanship in three distinct stages of this narrative. The pattern of divergence that the historian developed in the Persian ethnography, as analyzed in the first chapter above, demonstrated how he distinguished between the Persians and Magi by contrasting the burial customs of each. First, this chapter will examine how Herodotus sets the stage for this conflict by contrasting the Magi's penchant for lying with the Persians' reluctance to do so. We will see how Herodotus demonstrates that the Persians find victory in their revolt against the Magi only through their adherence to their *nomoi*. Second, we will analyze how Herodotus uses language that parallels his other accounts of the defeat of Persian enemies to describe how one Magus' reliance upon the bow reveals the usurper's lack of knowledge of the practice of archery, a fact that consequently leads to his downfall. The final section of this chapter will examine how the historian describes Darius' reliance upon his horse and a trick devised by his groom to secure the kingship. In this account, Darius' groom reveals his knowledge of the behavior of horses and the Persian nobles demonstrate their recognition of the importance of horse riding to their customs through their show of obeisance before the new king. Thus, in his

narrative of the fall of the Magi and the ascension of Darius, Herodotus recalls all three elements of the Persians' educational practices. The historian's reliance upon these pedagogical *nomoi* in his portrayal of Persian behavior reveals the links that Herodotus constructs between his ethnography of the Persians and his narrative. The account of the fall of the Magi and rise of Darius provides for Herodotus the chance to weave all three facets of the Persians' educational trivium into a single narrative as he demonstrates how the Persians find success only through their adherence to their practices of truth telling, archery, and horsemanship.

Much scholarly attention has been devoted to the question of Herodotus' "accuracy" in relation to the Behistun inscription.[99] Given that the current examination of Herodotus' *Histories* deals with the work's internal historiographic concerns, its relation to the official version of events sanctioned by Darius is incidental to the narratological and literary analysis that is stressed here. Furthermore, the monument is recognizably propagandistic in purpose and therefore has its own set of concerns regarding its historicity.[100] This chapter will argue instead that Herodotus' account of the fall of the Magi and ascension of Darius stems, at least in part, from an interest in demonstrating the relationship between the Persians' *nomoi* and their actions. Any correlations between the Behistun inscription and the historian's account may reflect portions of the oral traditions derived from the monumental text prevalent in Asia Minor that Herodotus found expedient to his aim of drawing the parallels between the educational trivium of the

[99] v. Introduction, above, pp. 7-8.
[100] For a summary of the problems surrounding the complicated process of composition and dissemination of the Behistun inscription and its propagandistic nature, v. Balcer (1987), pp. 26-32 and 49-69, respectively.

Persians and their behavior. Alternatively, Herodotus may have been aware of the text of the Behistun inscription and reworked the details of its account, combining these with the oral traditions related to him.

The theme of truth telling among the Persians occupies a central position from the very beginning of Herodotus' account of the fall of the Magi. This section will analyze how the historian contrasts Persian veracity with the Magi's penchant for lying to set the stage for the larger *logos* of the ascension of Darius. We will see how the Magi take the throne by propagating a falsehood concerning the identity of the imposter Smerdis and encourage Prexaspes to lie about the former's true identity. The Seven, on the other hand, find themselves hard pressed to justify mendacity even under these harsh circumstances. Though the Persian nobles do eventually agree, in speech, to tell a lie in their effort to reclaim the throne, this concession to diverge from their *nomos* goes unfulfilled as the historian recounts how they instead turn to the use of violence to force their way through the courtyard. Herodotus foregrounds this relationship between speech and action in the opening exchanges of his larger *logos*. Ultimately, we will analyze how Herodotus constructs his depiction of the fall of the Magi by contrasting lying and truth telling, as the Persians come upon success and honor as rewards for their veracity, while the Magi find only their deaths as the consequence of their mendacity.

After Herodotus describes Cambyses' early reign and his madness in the first part of the third book of the *Histories* (3.1-38), he briefly narrates a war between Sparta and Samos (3.39-60) before returning his focus to Persia. At this juncture, the historian describes how the Magi take advantage of the murder of Cambyses' brother Smerdis by

placing a Magus who also happens to be named Smerdis on the throne (3.61). Herodotus then relates how the Magi send heralds: προερέοντα τῷ στρατῷ ὡς Σμέρδιος τοῦ Κύρου ἀκουστέα εἴη τοῦ λοιποῦ ἀλλ' οὐ Καμβύσεω, "to proclaim to the army that Smerdos, the son of Cyrus, must be obeyed but not Cambyses" (3.61.3). This mendacious claim demonstrates that the historian establishes the revolt of the Magi upon a foundation of their deceptive speech, propagated throughout the empire by heralds.

Cambyses learns the truth behind the Magi's conspiracy to seize the throne while on his deathbed in Syria. Before he dies, the Great King informs the assembled Persian nobles of the usurpation of the throne at the hands of the Magi and charges the Persians with reclaiming the kingship from these imposters:

> μὴ περιιδεῖν τὴν ἡγεμονίην αὖτις ἐς Μήδους περιελθοῦσαν, ἀλλ' εἴτε δόλῳ ἔχουσι αὐτὴν κτησάμενοι, δόλῳ ἀπαιρεθῆναι ὑπὸ ὑμέων, εἴτε καὶ σθένεϊ τεῳ κατεργασάμενοι, σθένεϊ κατὰ τὸ καρτερὸν ἀνασώσασθαι (3.65.6)
>
> Do not allow the rule to return once more to the Medes, but if they acquired it through a trick, then take it away from them by a trick; and if they wrangled it by might, then recover it forcefully by might.

Cambyses equates these imposter Magi with the Medes in his directive to the Persian nobles. This correlation recalls the historian's description of the Magi as a caste of the Medes (1.101), but more significantly demonstrates that he wishes to stress to his audience the distinction between the Magi and the Persians.[101] The historian thereby sets up the conflict between the Magi and Persian nobles as a struggle between distinct ethnographic groups, a divergence discussed in the first chapter above. The Great King then urges the nobles to reclaim the throne using the same means that the Magi employed

[101] v. Asheri (2007), p. 463, on this connection between the Magi and the Medes in Herodotus.

in usurping the kingship, even if that necessitates employing deceit (δόλῳ). The term that the Great King uses to describe the Magi's treachery (δόλῳ) conveys the meanings of both deceptive action and verbal trickery.[102] Given, however, that Herodotus makes clear that the Magi wrongly claimed the throne through deceptive speech (3.61-63), Cambyses thereby urges the Persians to use verbal deceit in turn, a method that would be contrary to their custom of truth telling.[103] This passage also foregrounds Herodotus' later depiction of the events that unfold in the palace courtyard as the Persians attack the Magi (3.77), an account that will be analyzed more fully below. Cambyses contrasts deceit with the use of force (σθένεϊ), a dichotomy evident in authors even before Herodotus.[104] In essence, therefore, Cambyses urges the Persians to oppose the Magi by matching them word for word, deed for deed.

Shortly after Darius joins the six other nobles in Susa, these co-conspirators debate the proper course of action to follow. Darius urges immediate action and first addresses Otanes as follows: πολλά ἐστι τὰ λόγῳ μὲν οὐκ οἷά τε δηλῶσαι, ἔργῳ δέ, "Many things are not able to be explained by word, but only in action" (3.72.2). By contrasting λόγῳ with ἔργῳ, Darius establishes a divergence between the two that privileges action over speech. As he continues his argument, however, Darius then urges his fellow nobles to tell a lie and overcome the palace guards through deceit, though he feels it necessary to defend the use of mendacious speech: Ἔνθα γάρ τι δεῖ ψεῦδος

[102] v. LSJ, p. 443. Aeschylus, *Pers*. 775, uses the phrase σύν δόλῳ to describe the death of Mardos, the name which the playwright uses to describe the Magus put on the throne in place of the royal Smerdis. The Persian texts claim that the name of the imposter was Bardiya, though this identity has its own problems, v. Balcer (1987), pp. 49-69.
[103] Hdt. 1.136, v. pp. 45-49, above. The verb that Herodotus uses to describe the Persian education in truth telling, ἀληθίζεσθαι, does specifically denote veracity in speech, v. LSJ, pp. 63-64.
[104] v., e.g., Homer, *Od.* 9.406, *Il.* 7.142, and Aeschylus *Prom.* 215.

λέγεσθαι, λεγέσθω, "For when it is necessary to tell a lie, let it be told" (3.72.4). What follows is a sophistic argument in which Darius stresses the ambiguity between the objective behind lying and telling the truth and contends that the type of speech and action matter little because the ultimate goal is the same.[105] The rationale behind his argument matters less to this analysis than its necessity. The very effort that Darius undertakes to convince his fellow conspirators to lie demonstrates the other Persians' reluctance to contradict their custom of learning to tell the truth. Darius' argument in favor of mendacity, at least in a situation where a lie can achieve the same result as the truth, demonstrates his lack of compunction about lying and foregrounds his use of a ruse to secure the kingship, discussed below. Though this assertion for the need for mendacity runs contrary to the previously established connection between the Persians' adherence to their *nomoi* and their successes, the resolution of this conflict between the Magi and the Seven will demonstrate that the Persians do, in fact, faithfully exhibit their devotion to their customs. Darius concludes his proposal by mentioning that they can use force against any guard who continues to stand in their way (3.72.5), thus continuing the contrast between both speech and action by noting the potential need for both. Following Darius' argument, Gobryas expresses his approval for this proposed course of action and the other nobles agree with him (3.73). Thus, the council of the Seven moves to action with a resolution that involves an agreement to speak a lie, if necessary. Though their agreement notably contradicts the Persians' training in truth telling, the concession to lie

[105] v. Asheri (2007), pp. 391-93 and 468-69, on the sophistry of Darius' argument and its relation to the larger theme of deceit and veracity in the third book of the *Histories*.

if needed goes unfulfilled as they instead utilize force to move past the guards, highlighting the likelihood that they will ultimately succeed in this endeavor.

Later in the narrative when the co-conspirators reach the palace, Herodotus describes how they advance unopposed at first: παρίεσαν θείῃ πομπῇ χρεωμένους, οὐδ' ἐπειρώτα οὐδείς, "They passed through, enjoying a divine escort, and no one questioned them" (3.77.1). When they come to the courtyard, however, the eunuchs are the first to oppose the conspirators:

> Ἐπείτε δὲ καὶ παρῆλθον ἐς τὴν αὐλήν, ἐνέκυρσαν τοῖσι τὰς ἀγγελίας ἐσφέρουσι εὐνούχοισι, οἵ σφεας ἱστόρεον ὅ τι θέλοντες ἥκοιεν· καὶ ἅμα ἱστορέοντες τούτους τοῖσι πυλουροῖσι ἀπείλεον ὅτι σφέας παρῆκαν, ἔσχόν τε βουλομένους τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἐς τὸ πρόσω παριέναι. Οἱ δὲ διακελευσάμενοι καὶ σπασάμενοι τὰ ἐγχειρίδια τούτους μὲν τοὺς ἴσχοντας αὐτοῦ ταύτῃ συγκεντέουσι (3.77.2-3)
>
> When they arrive at the courtyard, they came upon the eunuchs who admit messengers to the king and who asked them for what purpose they had come, and while they were questioning them, they were threatening the gatekeepers because they had let them pass, and they restrained the Seven who intended to push further. But the Seven, exhorting one another and drawing their daggers, stabbed the men restraining them on that very spot.

Thus, Herodotus describes the turn of events in such a way that the Persian conspirators did not make use of lies as previously agreed. Instead, they employed force at the first sign of resistance. The narrative of these events thus recalls but contradicts both Cambyses' mandate and Darius' proposal: though the Seven had agreed to use speech, by telling a lie, to enter the palace, this proved unnecessary at first and they instead push their way past the eunuchs with violence. Cambyses had exhorted the Persian nobles to mirror the means that the Magi had used to usurp the throne in order to reclaim the kingship, thereby urging them to use deceptive speech to defeat the Magi imposters. As

the incident unfolds, however, the Persian conspirators abandon both their own agreement to lie and their former king's demand that they use deception, and instead they act in accordance to their *nomoi* and avoid the use of mendacity. In the end, the Seven find success in their endeavor without the need for mendacity. They accomplish their objective without contradicting their customs. The emphasis that the historian places upon Darius' argument in favor of lying and the nobles' agreement to do so heightens the contrast between both speech and action and truth and lies in this account: the Persians verbally agreed to lie but ultimately realize victory by adhering to their *nomoi*.

Between Darius' proposal for mendacity and the Seven's arrival at the palace, Herodotus records the fate of Prexaspes, the confidant whom Cambyses commissioned to kill the true Smerdis and the one Persian who knew the truth behind the Magi's scheme. Upon the death of Cambyses, the historian first notes that Prexaspes lies about his involvement in the death of the royal Smerdis to save his own life:

> δεινῶς γὰρ καὶ ὁ Πρηξάσπης ἔξαρνος ἦν μὴ μὲν ἀποκτεῖναι Σμέρδιν· οὐ γὰρ ἦν οἱ ἀσφαλὲς Καμβύσεω τετελευτηκότος φάναι τὸν Κύρου υἱὸν ἀπολωλεκέναι αὐτοχειρίῃ (3.67.1)
>
> Fearfully, the denial of Prexaspes was that he did not kill Smerdis, for it was not safe, with Cambyses dead, for him to say that he had slain the son of Cyrus with his own hand.

Thus, Prexaspes defies the Persian custom of truth telling solely for the sake of self-preservation, an act that allows the Magi to secure the throne without initial Persian opposition.[106] Herodotus records that the imposter Smerdis and his brother bring Prexaspes to their side: διότι μοῦνος ἠπίστατο τὸν Σμέρδιος τοῦ Κύρου θάνατον

[106] As discussed above, pp. 49-52, Cambyses had murdered Prexaspes' son for telling the truth about the Great King's drunkenness, thus Prexaspes' fears are not without merit.

αὐτοχειρίῃ μιν ἀπολέσας, "because of the fact that he alone knew about the death of Smerdis the son of Cyrus, since he killed him with his own hands" (3.74.1). Had the Magi killed Prexaspes in turn, they could have concealed the truth. Instead, in accordance with their custom that Herodotus records in their ethnography, the Magi do not kill Prexaspes.[107] As an alternative to murdering the Persian noble, the imposters ask him to swear: μηδ' ἐξοίσειν μηδενὶ ἀνθρώπων τὴν ἀπὸ σφέων ἀπάτην ἐς Πέρσας γεγονυῖαν, "that he would not declare to any man the deceit that came about at their hands against the Persians" (3.74.2). In order to secure his friendship with the Magi, Prexaspes therefore swears to maintain this lie throughout his life, in violation of his childhood training to tell the truth.

As the final assurance to Prexaspes' secrecy, the Magi request that he speak before the assembled Persians and confirm that Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, yet lives and that he occupies the throne. The newly obtained confidant of the Magi climbs a tower to deliver this lie, but instead discusses Cyrus' lineage and accomplishments, following which:

> ἐξέφαινε τὴν ἀληθείην, φάμενος πρότερον μὲν κρύπτειν (οὐ γάρ οἱ εἶναι ἀσφαλὲς λέγειν τὰ γενόμενα), ἐν δὲ τῷ παρεόντι ἀναγκαίην μιν καταλαμβάνειν φαίνειν· καὶ δὴ ἔλεγε τὸν μὲν Κύρου Σμέρδιν ὡς αὐτὸς ὑπὸ Καμβύσεω ἀναγκαζόμενος ἀποκτείνειε, τοὺς μάγους δὲ βασιλεύειν (3.75.2)
>
> He disclosed the truth, saying that he had concealed it earlier (for it was not safe for him to say what happened), but that at the present time necessity compelled him to speak, and indeed he said that he killed

[107] Hdt. 1.140 states that the Magi do not kill human beings, v. pp. 36-37, above. Furthermore, in Herodotus' account the Magi are not responsible for the royal Smerdis' death, but rather simply take advantage of its convenience.

> Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, as he was ordered by Cambyses, and that the Magi held the kingship.

Thus, Prexaspes acquits himself of his former lies by revealing the entire truth to the assembled Persians. Herodotus not only notes that Prexaspes spoke the truth (ἀληθείην), he also records the full details of the nobleman's confession in order to assure his audience that Prexaspes left no element of the story unspoken. Prexaspes also insists that necessity (ἀναγκαίην) compels him to speak the truth, echoing Darius' assertion that, at times, it is necessary (δεῖ) to tell a lie (3.72.4). Following this revelation, the historian records Prexaspes' ultimate fate:

> ἀπῆκε ἑωυτὸν ἐπὶ κεφαλὴν φέρεσθαι ἀπὸ τοῦ πύργου κάτω. Πρηξάσπης μέν νυν ἐὼν τὸν πάντα χρόνον ἀνὴρ δόκιμος οὕτω ἐτελεύτησε (3.75.3)
>
> He threw himself off to fall down headfirst from the tower. Prexaspes thus died as an excellent man, just as he had lived for all time.

Through his placement of this judgment immediately after his description of Prexaspes' final act of truth telling, Herodotus implies that Prexaspes met his end as an admirable man because he had spoken the truth at the end of his life, in accordance with the Persian *nomos*. The historian's audience understands this brief comment because of the way in which he establishes the strong connection between the Persians' educational customs and their actions throughout the *Histories*. Prexaspes seals his fate as an honest man in this final act and thus exonerates himself from his earlier lies.

The centrality of the themes of lying and truth telling to the initial portions of Herodotus' *logos* of the fall of the Magi demonstrates a clear link between the ethnography that he presents in the first book of the *Histories* and this later narrative. Cambyses' deathbed mandate and Darius' argument in favor of the use of mendacity to

reclaim the throne both stress the relationship between word and deed and reveal the Persians' general unwillingness to lie even under the direst of circumstances. Herodotus' narrative of the actual assault of the Seven against the Magi, however, reveals that lying was not necessary to achieve their objective. Thus, though the Persian conspirators do initially agree to use deceptive speech, they find success only through the actions that are in accordance with their *nomoi*. The Magi, conversely, claim the throne through their penchant for lying and force Prexaspes to do the same in an effort to secure their false kingship. Though he initially lies about his involvement in the royal Smerdis' death, Prexaspes reveals the truth in the end and dies as an honorable man that adheres to his childhood training in honesty. Herodotus therefore sets the stage for his account of the fall of the Magi and the ascension of Darius by correlating the Persians' educational custom of truth telling with their success and by contrasting this *nomos* with the Magi's own proclivity for dishonesty.

Archery, the aspect of the Persian educational customs that Herodotus recalls prominently at crucial moments in the *Histories*, plays a small but significant role in the fall of the Magi. As discussed in the previous chapter, the historian records how the Persians use a bow to reinforce their claim to authority and to demonstrate their proper adherence to their own customs. In his account of the revolt of the Seven against the imposter Smerdis, Herodotus relies upon his presentation of the Persian *nomoi* from the first book of the *Histories*, in which he exhibits a clear distinction between the Magi and the Persians. One of the Magi attempts to defend himself from the attack of the insurrectionary nobles and finds that this attempt at archery proves to be his downfall.

The failure of the bow in the hands of the Magus recalls a theme that Herodotus established earlier in the *Histories*, namely that an enemy of the Persians who attempts to use the elements of their educational trivium against them will find defeat in this endeavor.

The climax of the struggle between the Magi and the Persian rebels provides the historian with the occasion to evoke the theme of the practice of archery. As the Seven force their way into the courtyard, the uproar of the eunuchs within causes the two Magi inside to jump up and arm themselves: ὁ μὲν δὴ αὐτῶν φθάνει τὰ τόξα κατελόμενος, ὁ δὲ πρὸς τὴν αἰχμὴν ἐτράπετο, "one of them first snatched up the bow and arrows, the other turned to the spear" (3.78.2). Herodotus makes clear that one Magus' initial response was to reach for the bow, only after that did the other brother take up a spear. As the skirmish commences, however, the former weapon was of little use: Τῷ μὲν δὴ τὰ τόξα ἀναλαβόντι αὐτῶν, ἐόντων τε ἀγχοῦ τῶν πολεμίων καὶ προσκειμένων, ἦν χρηστὰ οὐδέν, "The bow was of no use to the one that picked it up, since the fighting was in close quarters and they were pressed hard" (3.78.2). The historian thereby records that the style of combat that the Persian nobles utilized against the Magi rendered the bow useless, a situation that leads the Magus to his death. The historian notes that: ἐπείτε οἱ τὰ τόξα οὐδὲν χρηστὰ ἐγίνετο, ἦν γὰρ δὴ θάλαμος ἐσέχων ἐς τὸν ἀνδρεῶνα, ἐς τοῦτον καταφεύγει, "since the bow became useless to him, he fled to a bedroom that was tucked away in the men's quarters" (3.78.3). Herodotus then records how Darius and Gobryas together manage to kill this imposter. The Magus thereby demonstrates his ignorance of the proper application of a bow in combat.

In the words that Herodotus uses to present the outcome of the Magus' choice to use a bow, he recalls the language that he uses to describe Cyrus' stratagem to neutralize the Lydian cavalry, where he notes that the Great King's use of camels renders Croesus' horses useless (ἄχρηστον; 1.80.4). In this prior account, the historian's presentation of Cyrus' plan demonstrated that the Lydians were unable to utilize a quintessential facet of the Persians' educational practices, horsemanship, against Cyrus' army. Croesus demonstrated his inferior knowledge about the behavior of horses, while the Magus proves that he does not know in what circumstances a bow will be useful in combat. The parallels between the descriptions of the collapse of the Lydian cavalry and the failure of the Magus' bow therefore elucidate a revealing aspect to Herodotus' presentation of the Persian pedagogical methods. Each of these men finds defeat because he understood less about the Persian trivium than did his Persian foes.

After the Seven successfully kill the false Smerdis and his brother, chaos erupts in Susa as Persians attack and kill Magi across the city. As the bedlam in the capital subsides, the conspirators attempt to reestablish order. To do so, the Seven debate as to what form of government they should now institute.[108] The historian riddles his narrative of this deliberation with language and ideology befitting Hellenic political discourse.[109]

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[108] Herodotus explicitly defends the historicity of this debate. Fehling (1971), pp. 92-4, categorizes this assurance as a common device in "lying-literature" and maintains that such comments are demonstrable proof of Herodotus' mendacity; *contra*, Pritchett (1993), pp. 88-100.

[109] Lateiner (1989), pp. 163-86, discusses the examples of historical patterning evident in this debate and notes how Herodotus demonstrates his approval for Otanes' argument in favor of democracy because it preserves the Persians' political and cultural *nomoi*. Dewald (2003), pp. 28-30, notes that the entire debate is "an exercise in irony" (p. 30) because the negative arguments of the three interlocutors are cogent and the positive rationales less than convincing. Dewald (pp. 47-49) does, however, note that a comparison of this debate with his concept of Archaic Greek tyranny demonstrates that the historian had at heart to present a *comparandum* between eastern despotism and Archaic Greek tyranny in his record of this debate; v. also, Evans (1981) and Pelling (2002).

As the final speaker in this debate, Darius argues for the reestablishment of monarchy (3.82). Following his defense of autocracy, four of the Seven vote in favor of reestablishing the kingship.

The final section of Herodotus' account of the fall of the Magi and rise of Darius addresses the process through which the latter becomes the Great King. Though the historian presents two versions of Darius' ruse to secure his selection as king, each of the accounts maintains that his horse ensures his success. The final section of this chapter will analyze the language that Herodotus employs to describe the future king's contrivance and demonstrate how this ruse stresses the groom's knowledge of equine behavior. At the conclusion of the historian's account, Darius, as the newly appointed and divinely approved Great King, sits alone atop his horse, furthering the association between kingship and the importance of horse riding to the Persians.

After the Seven elect to reestablish the monarchy, they next determine the method of selecting the next king. Herodotus does not explain the rationale behind their decision, but instead simply notes:

> Περὶ δὲ τῆς βασιληίης ἐβούλευσαν τοιόνδε· ὅτεο ἂν ὁ ἵππος ἡλίου ἐπανατέλλοντος πρῶτος φθέγξηται ἐν τῷ προαστείῳ αὐτῶν ἐπιβεβηκότων, τοῦτον ἔχειν τὴν βασιληίην (3.84.3)
>
> About the kingship, they determined the following: that, at sunrise, after they mounted their horses in front of the city, the horse of the man that first neighs, this man would hold the kingship.

The historian describes that the Persian nobles first mounted (ἐπιβεβηκότων) their horses before undertaking this process of selection. Thus, as a part of Herodotus' description of their method of choice as to who would be the next Great King, the nobles ride their

horses just as they had been trained from their youths, an act that indicates that they are all eligible to be king. Though the historian makes no mention of any positive evidence for the Persian practice of hippomancy, the act of divination through horses, this custom is likely the source of his account.[110] Further religious ties to this passage are evident in Herodotus' insistence that the nobles performed the act of divination at sunrise, given that the sun was central to their religion.[111] Though the conspirators intend this selection process to be divinely inspired, Herodotus describes how Darius leaves little to chance.

The future king uses his groom, Oibares, to secure the autocracy for himself. After Darius repeats the decision of the nobles' council to his groom, he asks him for assistance in this matter: Νῦν ὦν εἴ τινα ἔχεις σοφίην, μηχανῶ ὡς ἂν ἡμεῖς σχῶμεν τοῦτο τὸ γέρας καὶ μὴ ἄλλος τις, "Therefore, if you now have any skill, contrive it so that we could hold this privilege and not any other man" (3.85.1). Oibares assures his master that he will ensure that his horse neighs first, to which Darius replies: Εἰ τοίνυν τι τοιοῦτο ἔχεις σόφισμα, ὥρη μηχανᾶσθαι καὶ μὴ ἀναβάλλεσθαι, "If you have some such contrivance, it is time to prepare it and not to delay" (3.85.2). Though the verb that Darius uses in each of these exhortations, μηχανῶ, often does convey the meaning of a deceptive ruse, in the negative sense, Herodotus often uses this term in a more positive or

[110] Dumézil (1984), pp. 143-49, describes the formulaic language associated with Herodotus' description of the election through the neighing of Darius' horse. Herodotus does note the sacred white horses of the Persians on two occasions: 1.189 and 7.113. Asheri (2007), p. 477, maintains that this anecdote is aetiological, and represents the historian's attempt to explain Darius' equestrian statue, which Herodotus describes at 3.89.3, discussed below.

[111] v. Asheri (2007), p. 477, for more on this connection. For Herodotus' awareness of sun veneration among the Persians, v. 1.131.2, where he describes the basic tenets of their worship.

neutral light.[112] The words that the future king uses to describe this contrivance, σοφίην and σόφισμα, emphasize that his groom bases his plan as much upon skill as upon cleverness.[113] Each of these terms conveys a meaning beyond simple wisdom to include the sense of understanding how to manipulate that knowledge to one's advantage. These words do, however, stress the groom's understanding of equine behavior. Indeed, Oibares demonstrates an intimate knowledge of the behavior of Darius' horse, as he uses the stallion's favorite mare to devise the means through which he assures his master gains the kingship. Though Herodotus describes two separate versions of Oibares' stratagem, each utilizes the sexual attraction of Darius' horse to the mare.[114] The groom's stratagem worked and Darius' stallion did neigh before those of the other nobles. Herodotus then notes that a divine portent corroborates the initial endorsement that Darius gains through his horse:

> Ἅμα δὲ τῷ ἵππῳ τοῦτο ποιήσαντι ἀστραπὴ ἐξ αἰθρίης καὶ βροντὴ ἐγένετο. Ἐπιγενόμενα δὲ ταῦτα τῷ Δαρείῳ ἐτελέωσέ μιν ὥσπερ ἐκ συνθέτου τέο γενόμενα (3.86.2)
>
> While the horse did this, a flash of lightning and thunder appeared out of a clear sky. The things that befell Darius sealed his success as though they happened by agreement.

Although the historian makes note of these signs of divine approval, he follows up this brief mention with further references to Persian horsemanship. Before giving the second

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[112] v. LSJ, p. 1131, meaning 2, for Herodotus' use of the word in its positive or neutral light: v. Hdt. 1.94 and 2.21.

[113] v. LSJ, svv, σοφία and σόφισμα, respectively. Though both of these words can convey the sense of "cleverness," the sense remains rooted in the person's knowledge or experience more than in an aim at deceit.

[114] Fehling (1971), pp. 82-83, lists this account among those in which he feels that Herodotus demonstrates a falsification of the story through the citation of multiple sources. Pritchett (1993), ch. 2, attacks Fehling's premise at length, v. esp. pp. 10-29. Cook (1983), pp. 18-19, likewise accepts Herodotus' version of these events.

version of Oibares' trick in the subsequent chapter, Herodotus first describes the other nobles' reaction to Darius' selection as Great King: οἱ δὲ καταθορόντες ἀπὸ τῶν ἵππων προσεκύνεον τὸν Δαρεῖον, "the others jumped down from their horses and prostrated themselves before Darius" (3.86.2). Thus, the rest of Darius' co-conspirators remove themselves from their positions on horseback and show obeisance to their new king by performing proskynesis, a custom that further recalls the historian's Persian ethnography.[115] As the nobles descend from their horses to show respect to their new king, they leave Darius as the sole Persian mounted on horseback. Here the Persians' veneration of Darius through the practice of proskynesis signifies their approval and acceptance of his selection from among their ranks as king.

To conclude his *logos* of Darius' ascension to the throne, Herodotus records how the new king erects a monument that leaves little doubt as to how he secured the kingship. The historian describes what he claims is the new king's first official act:

> Πρῶτον μέν νυν τύπον ποιησάμενος λίθινον ἔστησε· ζῷον δέ οἱ ἐνῆν ἀνὴρ ἱππεύς, ἐπέγραψε δέ [οἱ] γράμματα λέγοντα τάδε· «Δαρεῖος ὁ Ὑστάσπεος σύν τε τοῦ ἵππου τῇ ἀρετῇ (τὸ οὔνομα λέγων) καὶ Οἰβάρεος τοῦ ἱπποκόμου ἐκτήσατο τὴν Περσέων βασιληίην.» (3.88.3)
>
> First, he made and set up a stone statue: a horse on which there was a cavalryman, and he carved an inscription on it, saying the following: "Darius, the son of Hystaspes, procured for himself the kingship of the Persians with the help of the excellence of his horse (recording the name) and his groom, Oibares."

[115] Herodotus discusses the Persian practice of proskynesis at 1.134, v. pp. 26-31, above.

West analyzes the lack of evidence for such a statue and concludes, following Fehling's example, that this account is merely a "fantasy" of Herodotus.[116] Farkas, however, notes that the horse and rider motif is common in non-statuary media, such as seals and coins, during the Achaemenid period.[117] Though no such statue survives and even Herodotus' description of the statue does not match the statuary convention of the Achaemenid period, the historicity of this monument is of little importance. The historian closes his narrative of the ascension of Darius with a depiction of the association between the Persians' success and their understanding of equine behavior and their status as horsemen. Herodotus does not speak as to the identity of the rider that the statue depicted. It may portray Darius himself, astride his horse as he was when his co-conspirators acknowledged his newfound position as king, or it may represent the groom, Oibares, whose knowledge of horse behavior was instrumental in securing the throne. The inscription that the historian records demonstrates that both men, as well as the horse, share the credit and the honor for the success of Darius' and Oibares' ruse. Herodotus makes it clear that Darius won his kingship while riding his horse and, in fact, the explicit description of the nobles dismounting their own steeds leaves the newly appointed Great King as sole rider among men who are now his inferiors. Darius' dutiful observance of the Persian *nomoi* therefore leads directly to his successful ascension of the throne.

Herodotus' *logos* of the fall of the Magi and the ascension of Darius is replete with explicit references to the ethnography of the Persians that he presented in the first

[116] West (1985), pp. 296-97, follows the conclusions of Fehling (1971) that any story in the *Histories* for which Herodotus provides a source citation is demonstrably false. She then extends this pattern to her analysis of Herodotus' recording of epigraphic sources.
[117] Farkas (1969), pp. 57-76.

book of the *Histories*. The themes of truth telling, archery, and horsemanship become integral aspects of this account. Herodotus first provides the background for the downfall of the Magi by contrasting the Persians' custom of honesty with the former's penchant for mendacity. Both Cambyses' deathbed command and Darius' sophistic defense of the necessity of lying demonstrate the Persian's reluctance to lie even when pushed by extreme events. The Seven prove themselves successful, however, without the need to resort to telling lies and thus find victory over the Magi while remaining faithful to their *nomoi*. The story of Prexaspes, likewise, provides Herodotus with an example of a Persian noble who, although mendacious in the past, proves himself both honest and honorable at the end of his life. As the Seven break through the courtyard and into the men's chambers, one of the Magi attempts to use a bow to ward off his attackers, an endeavor that leads to his death. The Magus' reliance upon the bow during a close-quarters conflict not conducive to the use of archery reveals his unfamiliarity with this combat technique. This account parallels other portions of the *Histories*, in which Herodotus notes how enemies of the Persians fail in their attempts to use a portion of the educational trivium against them, thereby demonstrating the superior knowledge that the Persians have in regards to the elements of the trivium. Thus, Darius and his co-conspirators find success through the failure of the bow in the Magus' hands. Lastly, the historian's narrative of the ruse that Darius uses to secure the kingship hinges upon the success of the soon-to-be king's groom and the cooperation of the horse. Oibares demonstrates his superior knowledge concerning equine behavior as he successfully ensures that Darius' horse neighs first. The final image that Herodotus records of the

newly enthroned Great King describes Darius as riding his stallion while his now lesser co-conspirators dismount their horses and prostrate themselves before him. Thus, references to Persian horsemanship, including both their actions as horse riders and their knowledge of equine behavior, pervade the historian's account of Darius' successful bid to gain the throne. Herodotus reveals the importance of the act of riding a horse to the Persians in the equestrian statue that he describes.

Throughout this lengthy *logos*, then, the historian foregrounds the three elements of the Persian educational customs. He weaves all three components of the trivium—truth telling, archery, and horsemanship, into a coherent narrative of the fall of the Magi and the ascension of Darius. Herodotus' Persians find themselves successful as they live in compliance with their *nomoi* and their enemies find defeat when they try to oppose them using the same methods. Thus, the historian's intended link between ethnography and narrative history becomes clear: custom dictates action. Persians who violate their own *nomoi* do so at the risk of defeat and death. To Herodotus, therefore, to live in accordance to one's customs is the very measure of success.

Concluding Remarks

Herodotus crafts his account in such a way that recalls the customs that he described in the Persian ethnography throughout his narrative. The first chapter of this report analyzed the Persian ethnography within its context in the first book of the *Histories*. By surrounding his description of Persian customs with his narrative of the fall of Croesus and the rise of Cyrus, Herodotus begins to establish the correlation between the Persians' adherence to their *nomoi* and their success. As stated in his proem, the historian desires to analyze the way in which individuals and nations rise and fall. By placing the Persian ethnography within his narrative of the struggle between Croesus and Cyrus, Herodotus foregrounds for his audience that the Persian *nomoi* serve as one component of his explanation of the reasons behind their successes and failures.

Furthermore, the language that the historian uses to describe the individual elements of the Persian ethnography reveals that Herodotus explains the Persians' customs by explicitly contrasting them with the Greeks' practices. The method that the historian uses to describe the Persian *nomoi*, however, is narrower and more focused than the typical process of self definition through representation of the other. Herodotus repeatedly stresses what the Persians *omit* from their practices. He then draws upon this theme of divergence and exception throughout his narrative to establish further the separation between Persians and Greeks. At the close of his Persian ethnography, Herodotus uses the theme of omission to demonstrate parallel patterns of disparity between the practices of the Persians and the Magi to draw a contrast between these two peoples.

Next, the second chapter examined the theme of the Persian trivium of truth telling, archery, and horsemanship in detail. We saw how the historian integrates the individual elements of the trivium into his narrative at moments of particular significance to the Persians to demonstrate the correlation between their educational customs and their actions. This association between *nomoi* and behavior allows Herodotus to establish how their adherence to their customs leads to their success. Thus, Herodotus uses the trivium both to highlight how the elements of the Persian trivium are evident within their actions and to demonstrate how the Persians' victories and defeats are predicated upon their adherence to or departure from their *nomoi*.

Finally, this report demonstrated how Herodotus incorporated the three elements of the Persians' educational practices into one extended narrative. The themes of truth telling, archery, and horsemanship pervade the historian's account of the revolt of the Seven against the Magi and the ascension of Darius to the Persian throne. Herodotus demonstrates throughout this *logos* that the Persian nobles find success only through actions that are in accordance with their *nomoi*, though their speech may reflect otherwise. Darius, who is the first of the two Great Kings to send an expedition against Hellas, comes to power by demonstrating his adherence to the Persian customs of the trivium. The historian thereby draws a clear correlation between the Persians' exhibition of their *nomoi* and their success.

After his narrative of the decisive conflict at Plataea (9.25-89), Herodotus describes how the Greeks dole out the spoils of their victory (9.81). After noting that one-

tenth of the amassed goods were taken to Delphi and dedicated to Apollo there (9.81.1), the historian then describes how each Greek receives his share:

> τὰ λοιπὰ διαιρέοντο καὶ ἔλαβον ἕκαστοι τῶν ἄξιοι ἦσαν, καὶ τὰς παλλακὰς τῶν Περσέων καὶ τὸν χρυσὸν καὶ τὸν ἄργυρον καὶ ἄλλα χρήματά τε καὶ ὑποζύγια (9.81.1)
>
> They divided up the remainder and each took what he deserved: including the Persians' concubines, gold, silver, other goods, and their pack animals.

Herodotus then relates what Pausanias, the engineer of Greek victory, received in recognition of his efforts:

> Παυσανίῃ δὲ πάντα δέκα ἐξαιρέθη τε καὶ ἐδόθη, γυναῖκες, ἵπποι, τάλαντα, κάμηλοι, ὡς δὲ αὕτως καὶ τἆλλα χρήματα (9.81.2)
>
> Ten of everything were separated and given to Pausanias, including women, horses, talents, camels, and all the other goods just as before.

The historian therefore contrasts his descriptions of the spoils given to Pausanias with those offered to the rest of the Greeks. In addition to Pausanias' larger share of the goods, Herodotus notes that this Spartan general received horses (ἵπποι) as reward for his efforts, while the lay soldiers received merely pack animals (ὑποζύγια). The correlation between the Persians' successes and their customs, that we have seen established throughout the *Histories* and notably in the account of the fall of the Magi and ascension of Darius, allows a more nuanced reading of this passage that explains how these gifts extend beyond the usual aristocratic and Homeric ideal of heroic gifts.[118] The Persians, who had so often in the *Histories* found victory through the proper application of their knowledge

[118] For the epic intentions of Herodotus, v. Erbse (1992), p. 122. For analysis of traditionally Homeric themes in the historian's account of the Battle of Plataea, v. Nagy (1987), p. 178, on Hdt. 9.72.

of horse behavior and demonstration of horse riding, thus lose their horses together with their defeat at the hands of the Greeks.

The bestowal of these horses upon Pausanias thereby symbolizes a transfer of power from Xerxes and the Persians to this Spartan general, who will take command of the Greek fleet following their victory over the Persians.[119] This transmission of authority through the prize of the Persian horses may, however, spell doom for this Spartan general, as it was well known by Herodotus' day that Pausanias Medizes and consequently loses his command and his life for turning his back on his own customs.[120] Herodotus' correlation of custom, action, and success thereby reflects the highly crafted nature of the *Histories*. Portions of these accounts simply cannot be read in a vacuum. The historian intricately interweaves references to the Persian ethnography within the fabric of his narrative. One who pays attention to this ethnographic material will become aware of the fact that Herodotus uses his accounts of foreign customs to add yet another layer of cause and effect to the *Histories*. The parallels between the Persians' *nomoi* and their victories, when coupled with the defeat of their enemies, serve as a cautionary tale. As a person abandons his or her ancestral customs, he or she runs the risk of finding defeat in this endeavor.

[119] Herodotus alludes to this fact at 8.3.2.
[120] For a description of Pausanias' Medism and subsequent downfall, v. Thuc. 1.95.1-5 and 1.128-35.

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